

Food congloms
co-opt
counterculture

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Bloodletting in Transylvania

Ethnic strife rises from the grave.

Paul Hockenos reports

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By Ken Dermota

BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA

AS COLOMBIAN LEFTIST PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE Bernardo Jaramillo Ossa lay dying in Bogotá's El Dorado airport, it seemed that what was really being killed was any chance for an *apertura*—an opening—for the democratic left to break into Colombia's tightly controlled two-party system. On March 22, Jaramillo became the 1,044th Patriotic Union (UP) party official to be killed and its second presidential contender to be assassinated during the current race.

All sides agree that whoever handed the Ingram machine pistol to Jaramillo's 15-year-old assassin is part of a far-reaching conspiracy to complete a genocide of the Colombian left. The unanimity of opposition to the ruling Liberal Party has created the anomaly of a united call, from the Communists to Conservatives, to postpone the May elections and to form a constitutional assembly to strip the Liberals of their constitutional advantages.

The three days of mourning declared by President Virgilio Barco did not assuage Colombians across the political spectrum who claim that the government is at best a passive accomplice and at worst is directly responsible for the attempted liquidation of the UP. "The government can't guarantee the safety of the political expression of a minority," says Diego Montaña, UP president. "Where there is no pluralism, there can be no democracy."

The UP and UP: The UP was formed in 1984, ironically, as an alternative to violence. Colombia's two-party system represented the interests of a small urban industrial elite and a landed aristocracy, leaving the left's only political expression to bands of guerrillas. A presidential commission allowed the creation of the UP as a means of political expression for Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrillas who chose to lay down their arms.

The UP is now an amalgam of old and new left and more a movement than a party, says one member of the governing board. "You can be communist, or a believer without a party, or someone who just wants peace."

In the last six years, this philosophy appealed to about 2 million of Colombia's 30 million people, and the UP bragged of 67 mayoralties, three senate seats and the head of one of the largest trade-union federations.

The UP's success, however, brought a violent reaction since it threatened to upset the system that had served the ruling class so well—alternating as it did between the two barely distinguishable political philosophies of the Liberals and the Conservatives. When Jaramillo was hiding in Spain after receiving death threats in early March, he said, "They want to exterminate us because we are the only political party that has been able to challenge bipartisanship."

Furthermore, ultraright forces in the military were no more comfortable seeing "communists"—or anyone left of center—in the halls of congress than in the hills. Several army generals struck up relationships with large plantation owners who already had put death squads to work on leftists, unionized peasants and members of the UP. Landowning *narcotraficantes* chipped in money to buy modern weapons and to commission Israeli mercenaries to train the death squads. On



Colombian President Virgilio Barco: accused of passive complicity in spite of political slayings.

The bloody campaign of genocide against the Colombian left

top of the thousand UP officials who were murdered, another thousand members of UP labor unions and mass organizations have been massacred.

The result of five years of extermination is that by the time elections were held March 11 for mayors, senators, representatives and provincial councils, UP supporters were either dead or frightened off. The UP lost several seats in the lower house and all of its senate seats except for the one held by Jaramillo. The day before his death, the presidential candidate was doing poorly in the polls. With only one-half of 1 percent of the vote, he trailed all the serious contenders. He seemed a target hardly worth shooting at.

Yet government officials made two statements that expressly augured that possibility. Just two weeks before Jaramillo's death, President Barco said that the UP's publicizing of the deaths of their adherents amounted merely to "an election strategy." Jaramillo replied that Barco became an "accomplice" to the murders by trivializing them. Then Colombia's government minister, Carlos Lemos, painted the UP with the same brush as the guerrillas, the sworn enemy of the army. "The Patriotic Union and the FARC are the same thing," said Lemos. In Colombia, such an accusation is the kiss of Judas, and Jaramillo recognized it when he replied, "Why has he hung the tombstone around our necks?" Two days later, he was dead.

Easy scapegoat: Jaramillo's body was literally still warm when the military blamed Pablo Escobar, leader of the Medellín cocaine cartel, for the murder—an accusation that drew cries of disbelief from the Conservative newspapers, as well as from the UP's staunchest rivals, for the lack of investigation that preceded it.

Escobar responded to the accusation in a letter on which he placed his fingerprint, asking rhetorically, "Why would I attack a leader whom I have always admired?" Indeed, Jaramillo was in agreement with the two issues that Escobar has been willing to kill for: an end to extradition of drug dealers to the U.S.

and the opening of dialogue between the cartel and the government.

Opposition commentators saw that the government was knocked off balance and moved in swinging. Columnist Antonio Caballero wrote, "Only the army maintains that it was not the ultraright military that organized the assassination. And no one believes them. The minister of defense accuses *narcotraficantes* of Jaramillo's death. Pablo Escobar denies the accusation, and the fingerprint of a mafioso inspires more confidence than the word of a general of the republic."

The case against the government and the army is strong. On the day of the Jaramillo murder, his travel plans were known only to his family and to his military bodyguards. None of those guards flung himself on the candidate to protect him from the hail of bullets—they left that job to his wife. The

The case against the government is strong. On the day of the Jaramillo murder, his travel plans were known only to his family and to his military bodyguards.

military-operated X-ray machine at the airport entrance was broken that day, possibly allowing the assassin to enter with his weapon.

In addition, the UP cited several incidents that implicated the government in the long term. One heinous example is of a general, Oscar Botero, who declared his intention to rid the area under his command of the UP. If he is responsible for the repression there, he is doing a standup job. Hundreds of UP members and members of the UP-dominated banana worker's union have been massacred in the province of Antioquia. Even the UP

mayor of the town of Apartadó was killed. Botero has not been removed from power—nor even censured—but is now Colombia's minister of defense and has gone on to set up his own "private security force," a euphemism for "death squad."

Hector Pinzón of the Permanent Human Rights Committee goes even further, saying that many of the atrocities against the UP either began or ended at an army base, such as the November 1988 massacre of 43 in Segovia and the killing of a UP provincial council member in Puerto Berrio whose killer was chased into the Bombona army base and never handed over to police. As a UP council member puts it, "Wherever the army is in control, the death squads move with ease." Bombona subcommander Alvarez Henao became one of the founding members of the largest and most infamous of UP-hunters, MAS, or Death to Kidnappers.

Pinzón says it is not the military alone that is to blame for not insuring democracy. To have an *apertura* will take the "political will of the government and the heads of the traditional political parties and the will of the armed forces," says Pinzón.

Despite declaring three days of mourning for Jaramillo, the government showed no signs of changing its political will during the protests after Jaramillo's death. The peaceful, almost solemn procession of UP adherents and Jaramillo admirers that accompanied his body from the hospital where he died was stopped by police, and the marchers were beaten, tear-gassed and doused with indelible red ink for later identification. The body was taken to the capitol. UP Sen. Humberto Oviedo says bitterly, "We carry off the dead and then we have to run so they don't kill us."

The ruling Liberals have made no firm statements to indicate that protection of the UP—or any other opposition parties—will improve. As Liberal Rep. Julio Ortiz says vaguely, "We hope the government will take the necessary measures."

Colombia's Liberal Party government is in crisis, having lost tremendous credibility through its handling of the events of the last month. The UP has picked up momentum since Jaramillo's death by spearheading an opposition pact that has as its centerpiece a constitutional assembly to eliminate constitutional provisions giving special privileges to the two established parties, such as granting judgeships only to Liberals or Conservatives. All the opposition parties are signatories to the pact, including the Social Conservatives, who, although they have the privileges on paper, have been out of power for most of the last 20 years.

Alba Lucia López, a former UP mayor and one of Jaramillo's former wives, said the UP has no choice but to assert itself in such activities as the proposed constitutional assembly and to continue community organizing as long as the UP is excluded from electoral politics. "It is impossible to have options other than the Conservatives or Liberals participating in the process," says López. All UP officials have decried a return to violence, no matter if they remain political outsiders and no matter how many of their followers are killed. "Colombia needs a political solution," says UP Sen. Ovidio Marlanda. "There's no other way out of this blood-letting."

Ken Dermota is a freelance writer based in Bogotá.

By Joel Bleifuss

In Poindexter we trust

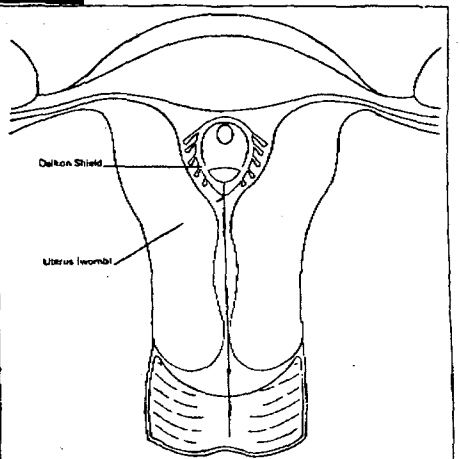
On the night of February 26, John Poindexter burned some midnight oil and wrote a letter to his supporters asking them to give to the Poindexter Defense Fund. The letter reads in part: "Dear Ms. Jones, My trial is scheduled to begin in just hours, and tonight I must ask you to trust me. ...Tonight, I must ask you to trust me as much as I love America and all that she stands for. Tonight, I must ask you to trust me as much as my dedication to our great nation. And tonight, Ms. Jones, I must ask you to trust me as much as I trust you. I must trust you not to let me down as I have never let America down. I can only trust that you will support me now as you have in the past, Ms. Jones. ... Please, Ms. Jones, as I anticipate the most difficult ordeal of my life, I must trust you tonight. I believe that you trust me enough to sent your immediate \$20 to my defense fund on the eve of my trial. Thank you, Ms. Jones. Sincerely, John Poindexter P.S. As I face the eve of my trial, I must know you trust me. Please send your immediate \$20 today. Thank you."

A good time was had by all

"Fun, laughs and a time to sit back and relax with an American hero," was how Brent Bozell III described the Oliver North Roast, a \$10,000-a-table fundraiser to help the Media Research Center in its self-described mission to "combat the liberal bias in our national news media." Martha Sherrill reports in the *Washington Post* that Bozell, chairman of the Arlington, Va.-based media watch group, opened the roast by telling the assembled reporters, "You liberals have made a career out of vile, repugnant, below-the-belt character assassinations only to forward your own petty agendas." But the humor that evening revealed not so much about North as it did about the below-the-belt insecurities of the assembled speakers. After Bozell warmed up the microphone, Rep. Robert Dornan (R-CA) stepped forward with a telegraphed greeting to the lieutenant colonel. Said Dornan, "Ollie, you've got friends you've never dreamed of. This is from Gerry Studds, the congressman from Massachusetts: 'Hiiiiii, sailor.'" Dornan then went on to say this about another openly gay Massachusetts congressman, "I thought Barney Frank and his friend [Steve] Gobie were coming, but they've gotten jobs with the *Washington Post*. Gobie's going to write a column on how to run a small business out of your house, and Ben Bradlee's hired Barney as the new religion editor." Dornan was followed by Rush Limbaugh, a popular New York City radio commentator who is scheduled to spend a week as a guest host on CBS' *Pat Sajak Show*. Limbaugh regaled the audience with this joke: "Barney, as you know, when he admitted all at the press conference said that he was just being a good liberal—trying to help Steve Gobie. But instead I got suckered," [said Barney]. Some of the barbs at the North roast, however, were directed not at gays but at North himself. Three California has-beens sent in their own tributes: Phyllis Diller, Bob Hope and Richard Nixon—who voiced support for others who, like North, had been "burned by the left."

Snake oil: But the star of the evening was North. Bozell told the *Post's* Sherrill, "He's a deep thinker with a plan for the future. Without a question he's going to take the helm of the conservative movement." For his part, North drew on Arthurian legend and used the event to announce that he was indeed taking over the "leadership of the Freedom Alliance." For the past several months North has been sending thousands of his "dear friends" a "confidential" letter asking them to help him decide whether he should "fade away or build the Freedom Alliance out of the fires of my adversity." The letter also requests that supporters "send me the enclosed reply form with your tax-deductible check of \$25." (Another version of the letter asks for \$100.) In *These Times* has not been able to locate any evidence to suggest that the Freedom Alliance is a legitimate tax-deductible organization. (See "In Short," January 24.) North writes in his letter that the Freedom Alliance would stand up to "international terrorism, radical insurgent groups, drug barons, an increasingly imperial Congress and an arrogant army of ultramilitant feminists" that were placing America's future at risk. But by the night of the roast, the group's quest had changed. North told his audience that the Freedom Alliance's mission was to help children by focusing on drugs, divorce, infant-mortality rates and teenage pregnancy.

Many doctors are using the new and improved I.U.D.'s for effective family planning. It is estimated that several million women in the United States are now wearing them. And the Dalkon Shield is becoming the choice of more and more doctors because it provides more dependable protection without the worry or trouble of other available methods. The Shield is scientifically designed to conform to the shape and size of the uterine cavity. Clinical studies show that it is highly effective in preventing pregnancy.



The Dalkon Shield in place in the uterus

Unlike loops, coils or rings, the Shield is designed to fit the shape and contour of the uterine cavity and thus provide greater comfort to the patient. The string is used for checking the Shield's placement and as an aid in removal.

Excerpt from a Dalkon Shield pamphlet

The Dalkon Shield, once touted as a "safe" form of birth control, caused sterility and even death among its users.

Dalkon Shield payout plan adds insult to injury

When thousands of Dalkon Shield victims began receiving their long-awaited settlement offers in the mail last month, they expected just compensation for the uncontrolled bleeding, involuntarily aborted pregnancies, sterility—and even deaths—attributable to the notorious intrauterine device.

Instead, they found this:

Option 1: Sign an affidavit that you were a Dalkon Shield user and receive \$725.

Option 2: Submit medical evidence that you had a Dalkon Shield and were injured and receive a minimum of \$850 for relatively minor injuries to a maximum of \$5,500 for those who had to undergo a hysterectomy.

Option 3: Submit to a full review of medical records which must establish a causative link between Dalkon Shield use and subsequent injuries.

Option 4: Defer settlement of claim.

"The women are outraged," says Vera Davis, president of the Dalkon Shield Women's Support Group in Southern California who was rendered sterile by the device. "Five thousand five hundred dollars is an insult. We added it up. It comes out to 75 cents a day—for all that pain and suffering."

The Dalkon Shield Claimants Trust, which mailed out the 100,000-plus packets on March 15, sees it differently.

"The unfortunate thing about the reaction to the packets is that by focusing on Option 2 amounts, it ig-

nores the fact that the claimants do have the possibility for a far greater compensation under Option 3," says Julie Freeman, manager of claimant relations.

Davis, however, counters that for many victims, especially lower-income minority women, Option 3, with its requirement of detailed medical proof, is no option.

"Take a low-income woman who lives in Watts," Davis says. "Her hospital was right there in the center of Watts. Go back now and there's a McDonald's there."

In the past four years, 27 hospitals have shut down in low-income areas of Los Angeles alone, according to the Dalkon Shield Women's Support Group. County health officials there have been unable to help the women recover their records.

Davis also notes that some Dalkon Shield cases go back as far as 20 years and that medical facilities are not required to keep records that long.

"I think minority women will suffer adversely in a larger proportion [in the settlement]," says John W. Milton, an attorney in the case, citing limited access to attorneys and other legal resources as another stumbling block for lower-income women who seek larger settlements under Option 3.

Other complicating factors that affect all women are the tendency for medical practitioners to have misdiagnosed Dalkon Shield-related conditions, especially in the early '70s, when little was known about them. These misdiagnoses, according to Milton, can be used as a basis for discounting a victim's claim. Also, many claimants are finding that

even though the law requires full disclosure of medical records to patients, doctors are reluctant to part with them for fear of being sued themselves.

"It's like a wall," says one woman who asked not to be identified. "After what we went through, for them to say, 'We don't have your records.' It hurts."

Freeman claims that trust officials are sympathetic, but she asserts that they have the responsibility to preserve the fund to compensate women who can actually prove that they were damaged by the device. "If we take away those requirements," Freeman says, "it's an invitation to fraud."

The Dalkon Shield was sold in the U.S. between 1970 and 1974. The trust was created in 1985 when the Virginia-based A.H. Robins Co., which manufactured the Dalkon Shield, was forced into bankruptcy by the avalanche of lawsuits. American Home Products bought A.H. Robins and deposited \$2.5 billion in a trust fund from which the victims would be paid.

Davis says the trust, which operates with a staff of 200 full-time employees, has become a vehicle for its own perpetuation. Michael Shepard, director of the Dalkon Shield Claimants' Trust, earns \$150,000 a year, according to the publication *Legal Times*.

Those interested in finding out more about how the settlement affects them can call the Dalkon Shield Women's Support Group Hotline at (213) 756-2425 or the Dalkon Shield Information Network at (215) 867-6577. Both are non-profit women's support groups. —Mark Ehrman

Seattle socialists win First Amendment fight

After six years of battling in court to protect the privacy of their meeting records, the tiny Freedom Socialist Party (FSP) of Seattle, Wash., scored a victory in the Washington state Supreme Court. On February 22 the court ruled that meeting minutes must be included in the range of in-

formation protected by the First Amendment.

"This is a historic decision for all membership organizations," said Susan Taylor, president of the Seattle chapter of the National Lawyers Guild, which had earlier filed an amicus brief for the FSP in its long court battle. "It is crucial that members of an organization should feel free to discuss issues of importance, among themselves, without operating under the cloud of fear that views

expressed confidentially are subject to disclosure."

The First Amendment battle sprang from a lawsuit filed by former FSP member Richard Snedigar to recover \$22,500 he had donated to an FSP building fund in 1979. The case has hinged for the last six years on Snedigar's request for FSP meeting notes that would show, he claimed, that the party had committed fraud against him (*In These Times*, Oct. 18, 1989). A lower court ordered the FSP

to turn over the minutes. After the lower court held the FSP in default, the group appealed the ruling. The appeals court also ordered the FSP to turn over its minutes because the group had not proven it would be harmed by disclosure.

The Washington state Supreme Court said in its February decision that the appeals court had erred in requiring the FSP to show "actual" infringement of its First Amendment rights before it could rule that their records should remain private. "The party asserting the First Amendment associational privilege is only required to show some probability that the required disclosure will harm its

First Amendment rights," the court said. The ruling also overturned the lower court judgment that had required the FSP to pay Snedigar the \$22,500 because it had refused to turn over the records.

But the court did not issue a complete protection of FSP's records. It said, "The party seeking discovery must establish the relevancy and materiality of the information sought and show that there are no reasonable alternative sources for the information. If this burden is met, the trial court must balance the competing interests."

This battle to protect the records of organizations has a long history,

going back at least to the court battles of the '50s in which the Southern states sued the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to force it to reveal membership lists and other records. In these instances and in case after case cited by the Washington state Supreme Court, the First Amendment protection was extended to records of organizations. It seems that some group will have to lose in the state courts before the issue will finally be resolved by the U.S. Supreme Court and thereby eliminate long court battles like the one fought by the FSP.

—Florence Hamlish Levinsohn

One year after the Exxon spill: no safe harbors

NEW YORK—As the nation marked the one-year anniversary last month of the *Exxon Valdez* disaster, Center for Marine Conservation (CMC) President Roger McManus made a disturbing observation.

"If commercial air traffic were controlled as loosely as commercial shipping, few of us would board commercial airliners," he said.

McManus made his statement at a Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) press conference to announce the release of the group's report: "No Safe Harbor: Tanker Safety in America's Ports." The report, a critical look at U.S. commercial shipping safety, was released just two days before the anniversary of the tragic March 24, 1989, spill that fouled Alaska's Prince William Sound with 11 million gallons of crude oil. The release also came just one day before *Valdez* skipper Joseph J. Hazelwood received a suspended sentence for a minor pollution conviction on the condition that he perform 1,000 hours of cleanup work and pay \$50,000 as a token restitution to the state of Alaska.

The NRDC report, along with an independently released CMC study, warns that *Valdez*-size spills continue to threaten our country's coasts. Indeed, as the reports were being prepared, there were major oil spills in Huntington Beach, Calif., and in the Arthur Kill Kill van Kull waterways dividing New York and New Jersey. In the first three months of 1990 alone, more oil has spilled in New York Harbor than in the past two years.

With the country's 10 major ports handling the crude-oil equivalent of over 8,500 *Exxon Valdez* spills each year, the groups are calling for measures to improve tanker safety in heavily congested ports.

The studies recommend requiring oil tankers and barges to have double hulls and double bottoms, expanding the Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) systems to include more harbors and using them to command tanker movement instead of simply issuing advisories, improving the

oversight of pilots and bringing disciplinary actions when necessary, and establishing tanker-free zones in areas of environmental vulnerability. They also seek to improve emergency responses by centralizing major spill cleanups and developing new containment and recovery technologies.

NRDC senior staff scientist Lisa Speer estimates that for the \$2 billion Exxon has spent cleaning up the *Valdez* disaster, more than 100 tankers could be double-hulled. She adds that implementing VTS systems at 29 of the nation's ports would cost about \$450 million—or one-fourth of the price of the cleanup.

The NRDC also proposes user fees, which would make companies that use harbors pay for keeping them clean. The group says Exxon has been negligent in this respect, and while Exxon itself refused to comment, Bill Wordham of the American Petroleum Institute says, "We are always saddened by accidents like that when they happen, and you can be assured ... that everything possible is being done to stop them."

NRDC Executive Director John H. Adams does not feel reassured. He says that Exxon is an "oil company that continues to mismanage their duty under the licenses and con-

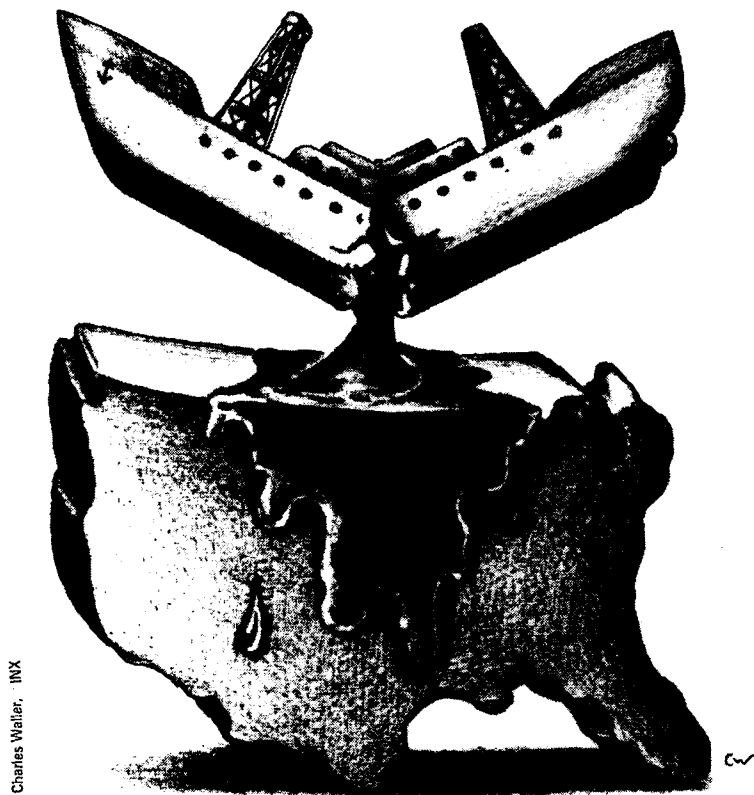
tracts and ... agreements they have to operate in any given state." And he adds that, in some respects, "management can be more important than perhaps even radar and double hulls."

The NRDC and the CMC plan to approach both Congress and the Bush administration with their recommendations. Although Congress is currently considering the Oil Spill Liability and Compensation Act of 1989, the environmental groups charge that the bill deals only with spill cleanups and not with prevention. The bill is currently tied up in conference committee.

Rep. George Miller (D-CA), one of the bill's co-sponsors, says, "The sticking points are the real liability of tanker owners and operators and the question of double hulling," which he says "is being fought very hard by some of the shipping companies." Legislators are also haggling over how much jurisdiction the Coast Guard will have over tanker traffic in U.S. waters. While Miller says he hoped to have the bill passed by the first anniversary of the *Valdez* spill, he now thinks it will take several more months.

In the meantime, as Adams said when introducing the NRDC and CMC reports, less consumer dependency on oil is one step in the right direction.

—Lauren Comiteau



Charles Waller, INX

Big sister

One of the many myths that mold the worldview of those on the right is that the media is controlled by liberals. It's true that reporters in general are to the left of center—they are, after all, some of the best informed people in the country. But the owners of the national media, while liberal on lifestyle issues, are protectors of their class and its corporate interests. Nowhere is this more true than at the *Washington Post*, whose liberal reputation rests on wilted Watergate laurels. This paper, which modulates the heartbeat of the nation's capital, has failed to investigate two of the most nefarious scandals of the Reagan-Bush era. The first is the alleged 1980 deal between the Reagan-Bush campaign and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in which Iran agreed to hold the 52 American hostages until after the 1980 presidential election, thereby insuring Carter's defeat. In return the Reagan-Bush campaign agreed to supply Iran with weapons needed for its war with Iraq. (*In These Times*, June 24, 1987 and October 12, 1988.) The *Post* did devote space in its op-ed section to examine the "rumor that just won't die." The second scandal neglected by the *Post* is the CIA's alleged connection to the failure of 18 savings and loans. The story has come out in the past two months in a series of investigative articles by the *Houston Post*'s Pete Brewton. The *Washington Post* has printed nary a word about this, despite the fact that the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence has announced that it will investigate the charges. (See "In Short," February 21 and 28, and March 14.) Why has the *Post* been silent? Perhaps because both of these scandals, if given wide circulation, would shake the public's faith in the Republican Party, under whose watch they occurred. The resulting outcry also would imperil the power of the CIA, the National Security Agency and other branches of secret government. In short, public exposure of these stories would severely disrupt the established order. According to Katharine Graham, the owner of the *Washington Post* and *Newsweek* and a tennis partner of Barbara Bush, there are some stories that the public is better off not reading. Mark Perry reports in *Regardie's* that in November 1988, Graham told a gathering of senior CIA employees at the agency's Langley, Va., headquarters: "We live in a dirty and dangerous world. There are some things the general public does not need to know and shouldn't. I believe democracy flourishes when the government can take legitimate steps to keep its secrets and when the press can decide whether to print what it knows."

Our man at the Times?

In a related vein, it is news to many, including former employers and one-time best friends, that Thomas Friedman, currently the *New York Times*' chief diplomatic correspondent, spent the summer of 1975 in a CIA internship program. Micah Sifry and Robert Friedman report in the *Village Voice* that for three months Friedman helped prepare classified-intelligence assessments for the Turkey desk. Friedman found fame in the '80s as the *Times*' man in Beirut and Jerusalem. A stellar reporter, Friedman picked up Pulitzer prizes on both beats. He failed, however, to report on his summer with the CIA in his 500-page best-selling memoir, *From Beirut to Jerusalem*. Friedman told the *Voice* that his involvement with the agency ended after the summer of 1975 and that any suggestion to the contrary is "utterly absurd." He also claims that the *Voice* is conducting a "classic McCarthyite witch hunt." Sifry and Friedman write, "Though Beirut, where Friedman spent five years as a reporter, was an important listening post for every major intelligence agency in the world, Friedman published next to nothing in the *Times* about the CIA's activities in the Middle East. A Nexis computer search of his hundreds of articles from Beirut for the *New York Times* reveals that he mentioned the agency only twice, and then only in passing. ... Today in Washington, where Friedman covers the State Department, his access to Secretary of State James Baker is the envy of the Washington press corps. So close are the two men that Baker is known to call Friedman late at night to discuss foreign-policy issues. They even play tennis together. ... Friedman, who now assiduously promotes Baker's views in his dispatches, is a crown jewel in the *Times* empire—a man of enormous energy and ambition. According to inveterate *Times*-watchers, Friedman has been gunning for the top job at the paper. More recently he has reportedly told friends that he might like to become national security adviser."

By David Moberg

WHEN GREYHOUND'S 6,300 BUS DRIVERS struck early last month over harsh new work rules and stagnant wages, owner Fred Currey's response was to hire permanent replacement workers. By late March, Greyhound claimed to have nearly 2,000 replacements on the road or in training.

Currey's move is the latest in a growing corporate predilection for breaking strikes—and unions—by permanently replacing

LABOR

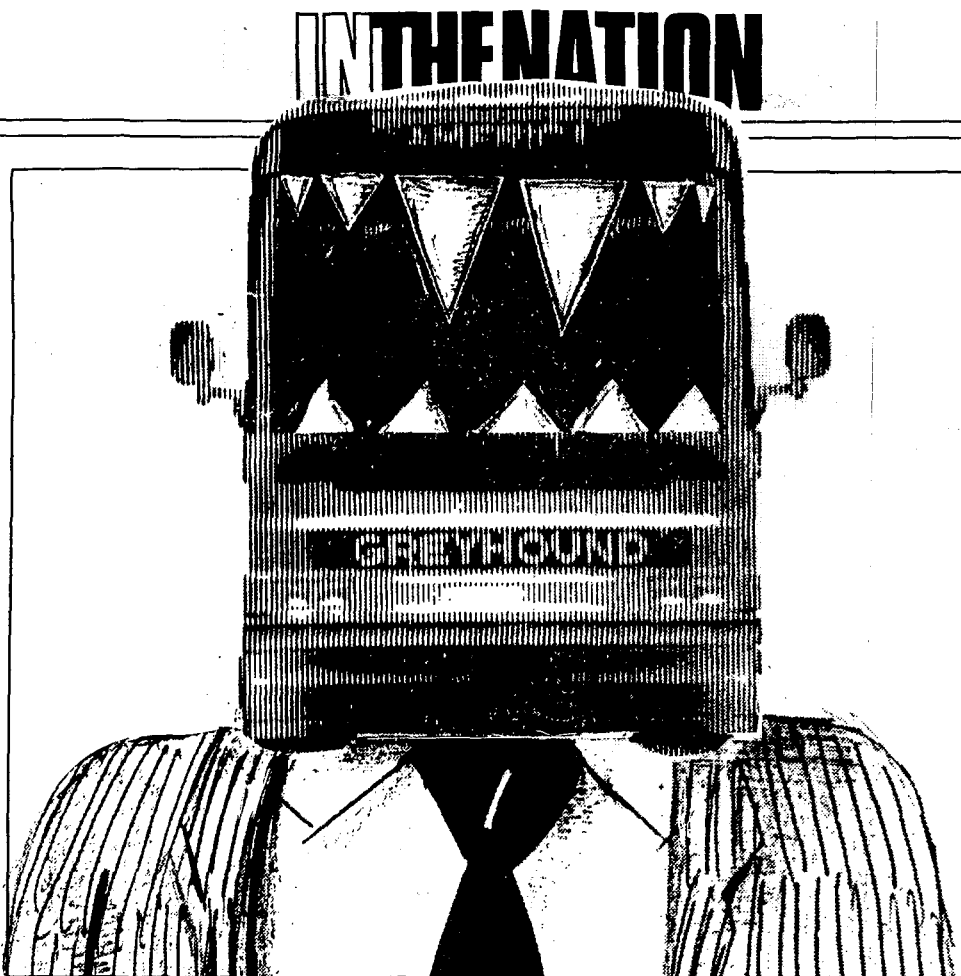
strikers. For many decades this weapon was used sparingly, and mostly against very weak unions like those of the textile workers who, following World War II, attempted unsuccessfully to organize in the South.

In the past, employers might have either considered it too difficult to find qualified workers or might have preferred to continue minimal operations using supervisors, automated equipment or strikers willing to cross picket lines. Many did not want to antagonize unions with which they would have to deal later. The use of permanent replacements—"scabs" to union sympathizers—increased somewhat during the '70s, while employers in the '80s were emboldened by Ronald Reagan's wholesale dismissal of air traffic controllers. The former president acted under federal law prohibiting the controllers from striking and did not rely on the general right to hire permanent replacements. But his action, along with the weakness of even traditionally strong unions, inspired anti-union employers. Even major corporations decided strikes were perfect opportunities to eliminate unions or at least cripple them.

According to Katherine Stone, a professor at Cardozo Law School in New York, hiring replacement workers, which employers now are quite willing to do, is "probably the most important economic weapon employers have" and can be a potent force in discouraging and breaking strikes. Battles during the past decade in which hiring permanent replacements proved critical and unions suffered painful defeats include those at Hormel, Phelps-Dodge, TWA, Boise Cascade, International Paper, Brown & Sharpe, AT&T, Danly Machine, Chicago Tribune, Magic Chef, Continental Airlines, Eastern Airlines, Colt Firearms and Greyhound.

Fighting back: Organized labor is attempting to fight back with legislation that would bar the hiring of permanent replacement workers. Introduced by Rep. William L. Clay (D-MO) and Sen. Howard Metzenbaum (D-OH), the legislation would effectively overturn a 1938 Supreme Court decision that barred employers from discriminating against union leaders when rehiring workers after a strike.

The case, *National Labor Relations Board [NLRB] vs. Mackay Radio & Telegraph Company*, cast a "shadow...across all of labor-management relations," wrote James B. Atleson, a law professor at State University of New York, in *Values and Assumptions in American Labor Law*. But because the union won the main point in dispute—that employers could not discriminate against union leaders—the *Mackay* case was little noted at the time. In a purely gratuitous comment on an issue that had not even been argued, however, the court declared that it was "not



Unions push for total ban on hiring scab laborers

an unfair labor practice to replace striking employees with others in an effort to carry on business."

According to Atleson, this finding was a reflection of previous common-law notions that gave property owners the right to keep their businesses running regardless of their workers' views. The finding also fundamentally clashed with the right to strike, guaranteed by the 1935 National Labor Relations Act.

The Supreme Court ruled in 1963 that employers could not offer inducements such as "super-seniority" to attract permanent re-

Organized labor is attempting to fight back with legislation that would bar the hiring of permanent replacement workers.

placements—supposedly on the ground that such actions would introduce a permanent cleavage among workers following a strike—and could not engage in actions "inherently destructive" of union rights. (Hiring permanent replacements itself induces permanent conflict and is "inherently destructive.") The Supreme Court also ruled in 1939 and 1940 that workers engaged in a strike involving unfair labor practices, as was the case in the recent Pittston coal strike in which strikebreakers were hired, cannot be permanently replaced.

Legal salad: This series of conflicting court opinions has resulted in a legal muddle that has increasingly diminished labor rights and bargaining power, leaving both at the mercy of judges' subjective opinions. While strikers in recent years have lost their rights to food stamps and unemployment compensation, the Supreme Court in a 1989 decision

involving TWA flight attendants ruled that employers were not required to give returning strikers their old seniority over newly hired replacements.

In many industries such as airlines, seniority is a primary determinant of pay and work assignment. The legal rationale for hiring permanent replacements has never been made clear and flows mainly from an unexamined bias which favors private property and the power of management. In contrast to the assumed rights of management to continue operating during a dispute, workers are explicitly barred from exercising a parallel right.

Although workers have a protected—if crippled—right to strike, they have no legal right to conduct sit-ins, to slow down operations, to refuse overtime or to conduct partial, intermittent "quickie" strikes. While employers can do everything possible to continue to earn a profit during a strike, workers who attempt to maintain their income by applying economic pressure to the company can be fired, despite the alleged federal protection of "concerted activity," established by the National Labor Relations Act.

The Supreme Court says that employers have total control over working time, wrote Atleson in 1983, a notion workers have long contested. Defenders of such restrictions have argued that slowdowns and related actions by workers would be "too effective," and thus should be barred even when used to pursue legally protected objectives. In the landmark 1950 *NLRB vs. Elk Lumber* case, for example, the Supreme Court ruled that workers had no protected right to slow down work after their employer had imposed a unilateral pay cut.

Making matters worse for workers, in 1987 the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a 1986 NLRB decision (*Harter Equipment, Inc.*) that employers have a right to lock out their employees in the event of a labor dispute and subsequently may hire permanent

replacement workers.

Only in America: In virtually no other major industrialized country is the legal scale so heavily tipped toward management. In Canada and in most Western European countries (with the notable exception of Margaret Thatcher's Britain), employers cannot legally hire permanent replacements. In Quebec, hiring even temporary replacements is barred. In most countries, argues University of Pennsylvania law professor Clyde Summers, hiring replacements "would be considered anti-social, and [employers] would have a hard time finding permanent replacements." On the other hand, workers throughout much of Europe rely heavily on slowdowns and partial, rather than full-scale, strikes.

When employers hire permanent replacements, they not only increase the odds of breaking both the strike and the union but chill the willingness of other workers to strike as well. And with labor's position weakened, fewer workers are inspired to join unions. Ironically, employers are tempted to resort to hiring permanent replacements not to fight against strong unions, as pro-management ideology suggests, but to take advantage of weak—which now includes virtually all—unions. Metzenbaum claims that while the number of strikes staged by seven major unions fell by half from 1980 to 1987, the number of strikes in which permanent replacements were hired increased by 300 percent during the same time period.

"Because you hold out these permanent jobs to people who are unemployed or underemployed, you really put them in the position of becoming anti-union in order to get a job," says Summers. "It's holding out a bait and saying, 'If you become anti-union, you'll go to work. If you have union sympathies, you can stay hungry.'"

Atleson and Summers both emphasize that hiring replacement workers ups the ante during strikes and greatly increases the likelihood of violent outbreaks between strikers and strikebreakers. (Although there is no evidence the incidents were strike-related, one Greyhound replacement driver recently crushed a picketer to death with his bus and several buses reportedly were hit by gunfire.)

Despite the theoretical importance of the *Mackay* decision, nobody had even suggested reversing it until Rep. Joseph Brennan (D-ME) proposed in 1988 that employers not be able to hire permanent replacements during the first ten weeks of a strike. Now labor is pushing hard for a total ban on permanent replacements, a move Atleson puts "right at the top" of needed labor-law reforms. It might be even more valuable for labor to win legal protection for collective action on the job, but unions—almost as much as management—have feared that workers could use such rights in an uncontrolled way.

Although the odds are poor, Atleson believes that if the proposed legislation does pass, it might lead to a "more European approach," which would establish that workers do have a stake in or a property right to their employment. "Therefore," continues Atleson, "it [the law] might affect other restrictive doctrines, like managerial prerogatives, that restrict the scope of bargaining. Once you say employees have a real stake in their jobs, other things start to break down."

By E. Rampell

HONOLULU

AS LABOR STRIFE DOMINATES NATIONAL news, the biggest hotel strike in Hawaii's history last week erupted into a battle to bridge the disparity between living standards here and in the continental U.S.

At the frontlines of what appeared to be a class struggle was the AFL-CIO's Local 5 of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees International Union. Declaring, "Fair is fair—we got our share," Hawaii's trailblazing hotel workers won their three-week-long strike

HOTEL STRIKE

March 24, setting a historic trend for state labor. By using militant tactics and remaining unified—98 percent of union members honored the picket lines—Local 5 won what both the union and management proclaimed to be "one of the nation's best contracts" for hotel workers.

The "master contract" for 11 hotels gives workers their key demand: parity with continental U.S. hotel employees. Calling for equal wages for equal work, Local 5 members won an estimated 35 percent wage increase over the five-year term of the agreement, plus an improved benefits package. The contract protects workers from strip searches and from job loss due to outside labor contracting. It also grants the union an extraordinary "escape clause," which allows workers to renegotiate contract terms pending a major change in the economy.

Paradise overtaxed: It's an election year in Hawaii, and a strike wave by Polynesia's proletariat could be on its way. In the '40s and '50s, militant strikes led by the International Longshoreman's and Warehouseman's Union (ILWU) broke the backs of the "Big Five" plantation oligarchy with the so-called "Democratic Revolution." Today, Hawaii's predominantly non-white overburdened workers live in what *Money* magazine calls "a tax hell," and the cost of living in "paradise" is so high that the state legislature is currently conducting an inquiry into pricing here.

Tourism is the main industry in Hawaii, where workers earn some of the lowest wages and pay some of the highest prices in the U.S. Despite a mid-'80s Hawaii tourism explosion—more than 5 million visitors annually—and a reported 43 percent increase in hotel-room rates, members of Local 5 insisted that their wages were much lower than those of workers in many U.S. cities, often within the same hotel chains. All this despite the fact that Hawaii's cost of living is estimated at 27 percent above the national average. Only hotel workers in Washington, D.C.—which, like Hawaii, is predominantly non-white—earn less. Many members of the interracial union are Filipino immigrants, and in order to survive many workers must take second jobs.

Throughout the strike—the biggest in Hawaii's history—union leader Tony Rutledge advocated civil disobedience, demonstrating in the streets and on the beaches and sending "mass invasions" of up to 500 strikers onto hotel and resort properties. Eric Gill, Local 5's organizing director, described the situation as "war" and said the direct actions were intended to show that the union could "penetrate their defenses."

Liana Petranek, president of the Association of Flight Attendants Local 43, asserts: "The hotel workers' strike is a victory for all working people, because they went out and

Hawaii hotel workers win a place in the sun

won. Nationally, many strikes have lost. The workers wouldn't get their increases if they didn't strike.... The successful strike is a lesson for other workers to stand up for what they believe in in order to get what they want. We can't exist on our pay here in expensive Hawaii," added Petranek. "Parity is something all workers in Hawaii should have. But where the cost of living is higher, workers should get higher pay."

Back to work: Local 5's members are expected to ratify the contract with the 11 struck hotels sometime this week. Workers already are returning to work during a transition period that will phase out the "scabs" who temporarily replaced them. At a March 25 rally, Tony Rutledge declared that due to Hawaii's high costs, "we should be 50 cents over [continental hotel workers], but we'll get that next time."

Honolulu bus drivers are currently renegotiating their contracts with the city and are demanding parity with San Francisco transit workers. These Teamsters are led by Art Rutledge, a veteran labor leader and father of Local 5's president, Tony Rutledge. On May 31, the Council of Hawaii Hotels' contract with ILWU workers will expire at eight outer-island hotels. Contracts at five other hotels negotiating independently of the council will end on the same day: the ILWU also represents employees at these hotels, for a total of as many as 10,000 members. These hotel workers have a sharp labor shortage and low unemployment on their side.

The council represents 11 top hotels on

the islands of Oahu, Maui and Kauai. All but one of the hotels are owned by Japanese interests, and some, like the Sheraton Waikiki, are managed by Americans. Japan has a greater foreign-investment presence in Hawaii than in any other state; one Honolulu bank estimates that Tokyo is responsible for about 50 percent of the Hawaiian economy, and many residents of Hawaii resent the Japanese presence and economic stronghold. Americans of Japanese ancestry (AJAs) are widely represented in both the islands' elite and the unions. On March 9, 200 Local 5 retirees, many of them AJAs, picketed Tokyo's consulate bearing placards that read in Japanese, "For the Aloha Spirit, do what is fair."

William Crawford, the council's executive director, acknowledges that Hawaii is more expensive than most states but disputes that hotel workers here are underpaid. Unlike all

By using militant tactics and remaining unified, Local 5 won what both the union and management called "one of the nation's best contracts" for hotel workers.

of the picketers approached by *In These Times*, who earn from \$12,000 to \$30,000 a year—Crawford refused to divulge his salary.

Although service was reduced during the strike, none of the hotels closed. Some offered added incentives to lure wary tourists, and chains like the Hilton imported employees from their mainland U.S. hotels to temporarily replace strikers. The council denies union charges that scabs were paid higher wages than hotel workers, and the Hilton Hawaiian Village, Hawaii's largest hotel with 2,523 rooms, claimed it had no vacancies and featured singers Don Ho and Charro.

The council and the union also waged war in the media, as hotel owners placed ads imploring strikers to "Bring the 'Aloha' [love] Back." In turn, the union ran a sophisticated media campaign of its own, depicting its members as "second-class citizens."

Laborious politics: During one of several labor rallies held in support of the strike, Honolulu's popular five-term mayor, Frank Fasi, addressed 2,000 strikers, declaring: "There's no way, as Honolulu's mayor, that I like to see our people get less than [workers in] San Francisco." The day before the rally, Fasi, a populist Republican, tossed his hat into the ring for the gubernatorial race and asserted he'd do what Democratic Gov. John Waihee wouldn't: support the strike.

While the ILWU showed little support for its striking comrades, the Teamsters refused to cross picket lines and contributed to the strike fund.

Gill, the scion of one of the island's leading political families, insists that history is repeating itself. "Hawaii's people are struggling for first-class status—this is America's first colony," he says. "After the Reagan era, the tide is turning. This strike is related to the international struggle."

E. Rampell is a freelance writer based in Hawaii.

While hotel workers in Hawaii won an historic contract, a strike wave by Polynesia's proletariat could be on its way.

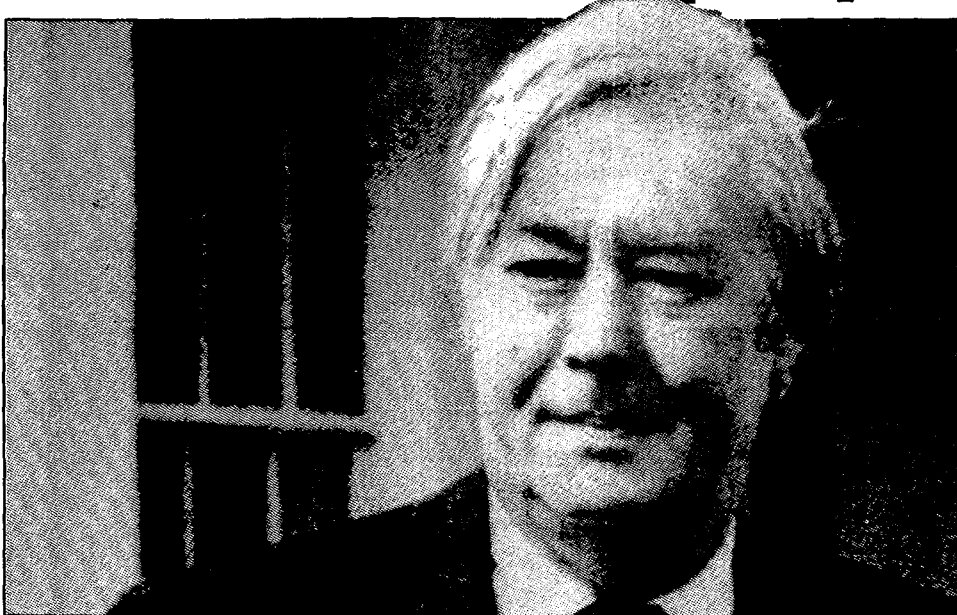


IN THESE TIMES APRIL 4-10, 1990 7

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

Confusion and division crash Democrats' party



New York Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan wants to cut regressive Social Security taxes.

POLITICS

nated DNC. And the DLC invited its political nemesis, two-time presidential candidate Jesse Jackson, to speak in New Orleans.

Both groups appeared to agree on the program. The DNC formally endorsed New York Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan's proposal to cut Social Security payroll taxes. And the DLC, while not specifically endorsing Moynihan's bill, did commit itself to "reduce the payroll tax burden on average American families."

But beneath these signs of party unity, confusion and division prevail. Appearances aside, the two groups did not really agree on Moynihan's bill, which is no great shakes in any case. And Jackson's appearance in New Orleans did little to calm the fears of moderate Democrats that if he runs in 1992, Jackson will cripple the party by scaring off white voters.

A stroke of genius: Moynihan himself defended his proposal before the DLC. The bill would cut regressive Social Security taxes by \$62 billion over two years, creating tax savings for both workers and employers. But it would also leave a large gap in federal revenues that would have to be filled by either budget cuts or new tax increases.

Moynihan argues that the bill should be passed on its merits, regardless of its fiscal effects. While in New Orleans, he advised

the Democrats to "say to the voter, 'That is not government money. That is your money, and we're not going to let them continue to break the trust in which we hold it.'" But congressional Democrats have balked at endorsing a bill that would widen the deficit and open the door to spending cuts and unpopular tax increases.

The Democrats' differing views of Moynihan's bill reflect the different perspectives of the political operatives who staff the DNC and the legislators who belong to the DLC. DNC Chairman Brown and other Moynihan backers believe that the senator's bill could do for the Democrats what former New York Rep. Jack Kemp and Delaware Sen. William Roth's 1977 tax-cut bill did for the Reagan Republicans: it could give the party a rallying cry that would win over working- and middle-class voters. "Politically, the Moynihan plan is a stroke of genius," Brown told the DLC.

But DLC politicians like Senate Finance Committee Chairman Lloyd Bentsen of

Texas or House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt of Missouri believe Moynihan's bill is irresponsible. As congressional leaders, they cannot endorse it without stipulating how to pay for it, which neither they nor Moynihan are ready to do. "I don't want to get into a bidding war with Republicans over taxes," Bentsen told reporters at the DLC. "We have to be responsible."

During its meeting, the DLC papered over its disagreements with Moynihan and the DNC by endorsing the proposal's broad objectives but not its specific provisions. Congressional leaders Gephardt and William Gray of Pennsylvania also promised to come up with specific tax reforms that incorporate Moynihan's proposals—a promise they have made repeatedly since last January but show no sign of keeping.

Act of desperation: Indeed, Bentsen and Gephardt were right to be wary of the Moynihan bill. The bill is a teaching tool—a political flashcard—that has effectively exposed the way in which Social Security trust funds are being used to hide a widening deficit. It is not, however, an economic program that promises both equity and growth.

By contrast, the 1977 Kemp-Roth bill did promise equity and economic growth. To critics who charged that it would bankrupt the Treasury, Kemp held out the Laffer Curve—promising that lower taxes would create higher revenues. Moynihan's bill is Kemp-Roth without the Laffer Curve.

In addition, Moynihan's proposal does not have the political clout of the Kemp-Roth bill. While Kemp-Roth promised to cut widely despised income taxes, Moynihan's bill is directed at the sacred cow of the Social Security system. In one national poll conducted last January by Market Opinion Research of Detroit, only 34 percent of voters favored cutting the payroll tax. According to the study, voters are "fundamentally conservative" about proposed changes in Social Security taxes.

If there is a bright side to the DNC's embrace of the Moynihan bill, it is the Democrats' growing commitment to progressive tax reform—an issue with populist potential—and their widespread rejection of the quasi-Republican economic approach embodied in Rep. Dan Rostenkowski's deficit-reduction plan. At neither the DNC nor DLC meetings did the Illinois Democrat's pro-

posal to raise consumer taxes and freeze entitlements win any support.

But the DNC's embrace of the Moynihan bill remains an act of political desperation—part of a vain search for a magic bullet that will vanquish Bush and the Republicans in 1992.

Common ground: The DNC's hasty embrace of Moynihan's plan also reflects the eagerness of party officials to focus on program rather than on presidential candidates. Nothing continues to divide Democrats more deeply than the prospect of Jackson running for president in 1992. At the DLC meeting, fears of Jackson's candidacy were heightened by the DNC's endorsement of a proposal to move the California primary from June to March—a move that would favor Jackson, who took one-third of California's votes in 1988 and could win an early primary against a divided field.

DLC leaders Robb and Nunn have been singularly inept, however, in trying to meet Jackson's challenge. Before the 1988 election, they got the DNC to adopt the "Super Tuesday" primary in the South, hoping that the increased influence of Southern states would favor a moderate candidate. Jackson, however, turned out to be Super Tuesday's greatest beneficiary. As 1992 approaches, they appear to be following a strategy of behaving outwardly friendly to Jackson while promoting Virginia Gov. Doug Wilder as a black alternative.

This strategy will probably also backfire. Wilder is a capable state politician, but he has shown no sign that he is presidential or vice-presidential material. His speeches on national issues have been vacuous, filled with attacks against unnamed but "unsound fiscal policies." As a candidate in 1992 Wilder could embarrass both himself and his sponsors.

Still, Wilder appears willing to be used by the DLC. At his speech in New Orleans, Wilder made a very clear attack on Jackson's conduct as a presidential nominee. "Those people who lose during our primaries must reject the temptation to cling to a sense of personal injury and defeat. Rather they must be called upon to unite behind our party's candidate," Wilder said.

Speaking after Wilder, Jackson tooted his own horn while mocking the DLC's factionalism. "What a delight that the DLC's invention, Super Tuesday, could help demonstrate the appeal of a common-ground agenda in the South."

Jackson argued that the DLC had come to embrace his own positions on social, economic and foreign policy. "Those of us who argued that the Soviet Union was weak and not strong proved right. ...What a pleasure it is to have the staff of the DLC join [New York] Gov. [Mario] Cuomo and myself—and this weekend, the DNC itself—in support of the Moynihan proposal to stop the thievery of Social Security payments."

Jackson's needling only further inflamed the DLC leaders. Commenting on Jackson's claim that he and the DLC shared a "common ground," DLC Director Al From told a press conference, "We trust that a few people in the press have a brain in their heads." The next day syndicated columnist Ben Wattenberg, a DLC ally, detailed the differences between Jackson and the DLC on everything from military spending to gay rights.

Far from resolving party tensions, the DLC and DNC meetings exacerbated them. The Democrats seem set on a collision course for 1992—not with the Republicans but with themselves. □

Party's blacks and whites face a Savage split

At the meetings of the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) and Democratic National Committee (DNC), the party's divisions were underscored by the growing furor over Illinois Rep. Gus Savage's anti-Semitism. In a March 17 speech, Savage had attacked his primary opponent by singling out his Jewish contributors. Rep. William Gray of Pennsylvania and Rep. Charles Rangel of New York endorsed Savage at the same rally but left before he made his remarks.

While white Democrats murmured that the party should treat Savage the same way that the Republicans had treated Louisiana white supremacist David Duke, black Democrats scurried for cover. At the DLC meeting, Gray, when asked by reporters about Savage's remarks, responded, "I went to the rally like I've gone to 150 others. I spoke. I left. I didn't hear what he said." Rangel and other black congressional leaders, including Rep. Ron Dellums of California, also refused to comment on Savage's remarks.

When reporters in Indianapolis asked DNC Chairman Ron Brown about Savage, he initially refused to comment. But a day

later, after reviewing Savage's statements, Brown declared he was "appalled" by what the congressman had said. Brown said he planned to call Savage to "let him know in no uncertain terms that the chairman of the party and the party itself abhors and condemns his remarks." On March 27, Gray, who watched a videotape of Savage's performance, declared his remarks to have been "unacceptable, divisive and bigoted."

The Savage incident heightens existing tensions among black Democrats and between black and white Democrats. Savage's anti-Semitism reflects an increasingly vocal and irrational current of black nationalism that is forcing mainstream politicians like Gray and Rangel to choose between their constituents and the party's broader principles.

Jesse Jackson, who has tried to ford the nationalist stream, stands to lose the most. In 1984 and 1988, Jackson had to answer repeated questions about his ties to Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan. Now he and other black Democrats will have to answer for the ignoble Savage.

—J.B.J.

By Salim Muwakkil

HERE'S THE LATEST: THERE WILL BE A "PEACE dividend." A consensus is finally emerging that the shrinking Soviet military threat to Europe will indeed free more funds for non-military purposes. And although disagreement persists on the windfall's dimensions, critics of current budget priorities sense an opportunity for major change.

Because of the damage done its constituents by the ravages of Reaganomics, the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) is more

BUDGET

desperate for change than most other administration critics. Moreover, this group comes prepared with a 10-year record of producing budgetary alternatives noted both for their humane focus and fiscal rigor. The CBC's "Quality of Life" budget for fiscal year 1991 is no exception.

"The CBC budget has demonstrated that this country can provide for our national security, increase spending for crucial social programs, reduce budget deficits and generate the necessary revenue without substantially increasing taxes," explains Amelia Parker, CBC executive director. But during the Reagan years the CBC budgets were dismissed as quixotic gestures motivated by the discredited logic of the '60s.

The first year of the Bush administration, however, offered some hope that things were changing; the CBC budget attracted the most wide-ranging support of its history. And since international developments of the past year have significantly altered the political context in which any spending plan will be considered, advocates of the CBC budget expect even more support this year. "There's no doubt that changing global realities have made the political climate more receptive to alternative visions of ways to allocate the nation's resources," says Russell Owens, director of the National Policy Institute (NPI).

Crisis issues: "And," he adds, "since the CBC has been in the forefront of efforts to formalize an alternative vision, it seems only logical that the CBC should be able to exert considerable influence on the debate." The NPI is the policy arm of the Washington, D.C.-based Joint Center for Political Studies and coordinates policy for the major organizations of black elected officials, including the CBC.

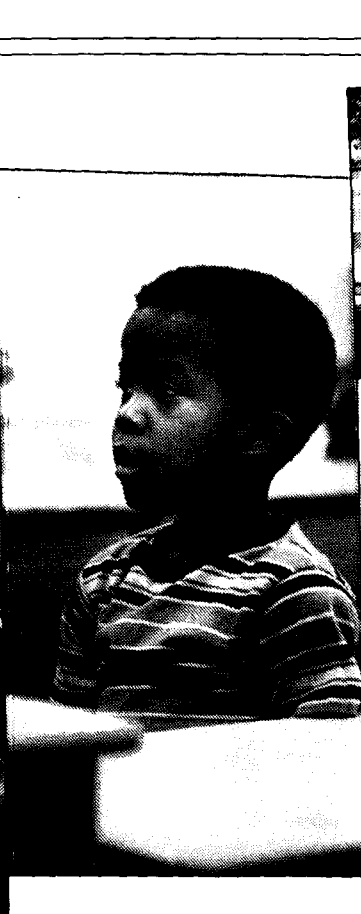
"The organizations we work with are not talking about minor shifts in budget priorities," Owens notes. "They're talking about the need to tackle issues like homelessness, growing poverty and declining health care. There is a crisis in this country, they say, but government is unwilling to face it. These officials are not engaging in 'peace dividend' speculation—they're raising issues that concern the survival of a community."

Most analysts familiar with Pentagon spending agree that about 40 percent of the administration's \$300 billion defense budget is allocated to fighting an increasingly implausible war in Europe. Even if military cutbacks are implemented gradually, the available savings will be considerable. Quoting budget experts, the March 25 *New York Times* reported that even if spending is reduced by "only \$10 billion a year, or 3 percent, for the next 10 years, the cumulative savings over the decade will be \$550 billion."

A legacy of Reaganomics: Although some in the Bush administration have reluctantly conceded that a peace dividend is pos-



Richard Stromberg



Mel Rosenthal

Congressional Black Caucus tackles quality of life under Bush

sible, few new policy initiatives have emerged from the White House. In fact, the president is urging more than \$20 billion in domestic cuts. What's more, the administration's proposed 2 percent cut in military spending is actually a \$6 billion increase.

The Bush budget simply perpetuates the destructive trends set in motion during the decade of Reaganomics: constrained by mounting deficits, domestic programs receive increasingly smaller portions of the federal budget. The combination of unprecedented peacetime defense spending and the tax cut of Reagan's first year created a massive indebtedness that experts contend will plague the country well into the next century.

"In the '80s, there was a total preoccupation with the bottom line, with the deficit, which has been very unconstructive," says John Palmer, co-director of a study by the Urban Institute on changing domestic priorities in the '80s. "By Congress having to spend so much time struggling with it, program needs and priorities have become secondary."

And despite increasing evidence that the nation's well-being, even internal security, is being threatened through the neglect of pent-up domestic needs, the government's \$3.1 trillion debt constrains any comprehensive attempt to address those needs. Interest alone on the debt is projected to be \$175.6 billion in 1990.

The dynamics of the debt will be more effective in the future than Reagan was in constraining the domestic-spending portion of the federal government budget. "It's a very large and lasting legacy of the Reagan revolution," says Alice Rivlin of the Brookings Institution and former director of the Congressional Budget Office.

New opportunities: The CBC is undoubtedly aware of the legislative obstacles to enacting the programs proposed in its budget, but the group of 24 Democratic legislators insists that the country's national security is at stake and that the opportunity

afforded by the collapse of erstwhile enemies must not be squandered.

"The dramatic changes occurring in our world represent a dramatic opportunity to reprogram tens of billions of dollars that would be spent on armaments and to reinvest them in the human and physical resources of our nation," reads the CBC document. "It is time to redefine our national security strategy."

"We must recognize that our nation will be ill-prepared to enter the 21st century if our children cannot read, write and calculate mathematics, much less understand the high-tech world they are about to inherit," it continues. "A nation that condemns its children to hopelessness, and the lure of drug abuse, is a nation that cannot remain economically competitive or morally strong. Our preoccupation with building better bombs has robbed our industrial base of vital research and development funds, of vital investment funds, all of which have dramatically reduced our ability to compete in the commercial world."

Budget specifics: These arguments clearly echo those contained in the CBC's previous

"The CBC budget has demonstrated that this country can provide for our national security, increase spending for crucial social programs, reduce budget deficits and generate the necessary revenue without substantially increasing taxes."

budgets, but there is some confidence that since mainstream America is no longer preoccupied with the Soviet menace, it may be ready to listen. Specifically, the CBC budget urges the following changes in budget priorities.

- It increases domestic spending by \$33.2 billion more than the Bush administration for fiscal year 1991, focusing more resources on education, housing, health, employment training, food assistance and methods to address the drug crisis.

- It cuts military spending by \$23.7 billion below the Bush administration's allocation. Most of the cuts are effected through reduction in nuclear armaments, shifts from the European land-war strategy and troop reductions in Asia and Europe.

- It raises \$10.6 billion in revenues through tax-equity measures. This will be done through requiring the very highest income individuals to pay the same 33 percent rate currently paid by middle-income wage earners. The budget also imposes a surtax on those corporate taxpayers who received the largest tax reductions during the Reagan years.

The crafters of the CBC budget avoided involvement in the complicated discussions surrounding the Social Security tax proposals of Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) and the risky deficit-reduction plan of Rep. Dan Rostenkowski (D-IL), but, according to aides of several CBC members, most see some merit in both proposals.

The NPI's Owens supports each measure. "Both Moynihan's and Rostenkowski's proposals are further indications that the political logjam that for so long has stalled investment in our human resources may be getting a bit looser," he says.

With various lobbying groups assembling their forces to grab as much of the peace dividend as their clout will allow, the competition is likely to get vicious. But because of their 10 years of experience at crafting plausible alternative budget proposals, CBC members are confident this could be their budget's best year yet. □

An Open Letter From The Plowshares Movement...

Dear Friends,

In 1980, the arms race. "a machine gone mad" in the words of the Vatican Declaration of 1976, was seen by many as inevitable, beyond challenge. Most people avoided thinking about it or accepted the endless production of weapons as a necessary evil, part of the system of deterrence, meant to prevent nuclear war.

Yet planning and production of a system capable of launching a nuclear first strike was well along. This was described as "maintaining the credibility of deterrence." In other words, the U.S. was trying convincingly to demonstrate our intention actually to use these weapons, to "prevail" in a nuclear war; even if it meant putting nuclear war on a hair trigger or launching a "preemptive" strike.

In taking to heart the words of the prophet Isaiah and Micah, we determined to "beat swords into plowshares." On September 9, 1980 we walked into a General Electric plant in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania and took hammers to two Mark 12A warheads for Minuteman III missiles. We saw our action as one of hope for the future and gratitude for God's creation which was—and is—under threat of planetary extinction.

We wanted our action to ring with the truth that everyone can take responsibility for the weapons produced in our name. Our act was, simply, a response to the Gospel injunction to love our enemies.

During our trial we attempted to say that it is illegal under international law to build these weapons and that we had acted in accord with the Nuremburg precept that citizens must act to prevent crimes against humanity. To prepare for nuclear war is to prepare for genocide and ecocide.

Since 1980, millions of people have found ways nonviolently to challenge the lie that weapons provide security. Tens of thousands of people have been civilly disobedient; some of these are now serving prison sentences ranging up to eighteen years for plowshares actions.

The Soviet Union has taken astonishing initiatives for disarmament and has begun to dismantle Cold War structures. No longer a distant dream, the path toward a future based on ideas of common security is before us. In many ways, everything has changed.

But has it? Today tens of billions of desperately needed dollars are still squandered on wasteful and dangerous weapons systems. The poor, especially the children, continue to be victimized by General Electric's and other corporation's larcenous hold on the public treasury. Both the rate of poverty and the military budget were doubled during the 1980s.

In 1980, GE received \$3 million a day in military contracts. By 1987, the total reached over \$15 million a day for GE alone, a corporation found guilty of defrauding the government of \$800,000 when they falsified claims for Mark 12A production.

Today we return to court for re-sentencing after nine years of appealing to the courts to act as protector of the life of the community. We also return to General Electric to say, **THE CRIME IS HERE.**

Daniel Berrigan, SJ
Philip Berrigan

Dean Hammer
Carl Kabat, OMI



Elmer Maas
Anne Montgomery, RCSJ

Molly Rush
John Schuchardt

"The Plowshares Eight"

For further information about the Plowshares Movement and what you can do to help prevent the threat of nuclear war, please write **The Plowshares Defense Fund**, 36 East 12th St., New York, NY 10003

By Lawrence Kootnikoff

MONTREAL

DURING HIS 16 YEARS AS LIBERAL PRIME MINISTER, Pierre Trudeau dominated Canada's political landscape. From 1968 to 1984, he was the sworn enemy of the Quebec independence movement and the visionary champion of Canadian unity and bilingualism.

By 1984, Quebec separatism seemed dead. Trudeau retired to practice law and live quietly in Montreal. But six years later a constitutional crisis has brought Canada closer to dissolution than ever before. Trudeau, now 70, has broken his silence. His target: an amendment to the Canadian constitution known as the Meech Lake Accord.

The accord recognizes Quebec as a "distinct society" and allots more legislative powers to all of Canada's 10 provinces. Opponents have criticized the undemocratic process by which the accord was reached and charge that it further weakens the federal government of what is already one of the most decentralized federal states in the world.

A tongue for a tongue: In Canada, "constitutional argument" is code for the often-bitter French-English struggle that has marked the country's history the way racial conflict has marked that of the U.S. Governing Canada has always required maintaining a delicate balancing act between the two language groups. Almost all of Canada's 6 million francophones—out of a population of 25 million—live in Quebec.

Canada's current prime minister, Conservative Brian Mulroney, dismisses Trudeau as "yesterday's man with yesterday's ideas." Mulroney says he's trying to clean up the mess Trudeau created when he reformed Canada's Constitution in 1982. But the Meech Lake Accord has created an even bigger mess that threatens to tear the country apart.

In 1982, the government of Quebec was the only provincial government out of Canada's 10 to reject Trudeau's constitutional reform. Mulroney, a Quebecer like Trudeau, came to power in Ottawa in 1984 promising to "reintegrate Quebec into the Canadian family." During an all-night bargaining session in 1987 at the Meech Lake government retreat north of Ottawa, ex-labor negotiator Mulroney twisted some arms and got all 10 provincial premiers to sign.

Three years later, unanimity has dissolved into bitter wrangling. To become law, the accord must be adopted by all 11 federal and provincial legislatures before June 23. With less than 90 days before the deadline, two provinces—Manitoba and New Brunswick—are refusing to ratify the agreement. Newfoundland also is moving to revoke its ratification.

Opponents of the accord were unable to rally support until Mulroney won a mandate for his free-trade agreement with the U.S. during the November 1988 federal election. The Quebec government's decision to override the Charter of Rights to preserve French-only sign laws in the province also helped to garner support and sparked a vicious circle of action and reaction that could result in Quebec's secession from Canada. Canadians are "sleepwalking toward disaster," according to a prominent Quebec businessman.

The English Canadian left and nationalist groups turned the fight against free trade into a patriotic crusade during the 1988 elec-

Canada's war of words heats up over Meech Lake



Former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau has returned to fight for Canadian unity.

tions, asserting the deal—which most English-speaking Canadians voted against—would lead to political as well as economic

CANADA

integration with the U.S. But Quebecers voted massively for free trade, giving Mulroney's Conservatives a parliamentary majority and leaving English Canadian nationalists feeling betrayed.

Sign of the times: In December 1988 Canada's Supreme Court struck down provisions of Quebec's popular Bill 101, which banned commercial signs in languages other than French, ruling that the bill violated the right to freedom of expression. Faced with nationalist unrest, Premier Robert Bourassa used a constitutional "notwithstanding" clause to override those freedoms and preserve French-only signs.

Reaction in English Canada was swift. Manitoba's Premier Gary Filmon reversed his support of the Meech Lake Accord, and polls now show that a majority of English Cana-

dians oppose it as well.

Not surprisingly, some of the opposition has racist undertones. The Association for the Preservation of English in Canada (APEC) sees the accord as a dark plot by communists and francophones to take over the country and force everyone to speak French—APEC spokespersons compare French to the AIDS virus. While APEC is known as an extremist organization, it has successfully lobbied more than 30 municipalities and cities in Ontario in an effort to declare them unilingually English.

This backlash has surprised Quebecers who have rallied around Meech Lake. The accord itself has become a symbol of English Canada's willingness to accept Quebec and its cultural distinctiveness. According to a recent editorial in Montreal's *La Presse*, Quebecers said "yes" to Canada in 1980 when they defeated a separatist referendum. "[Quebeckers] ask themselves when Canada is going to say 'yes' to Quebec," continues the editorial.

Canadians now seem almost resigned to

the prospect of the country's dismemberment. Record numbers of Quebecers say they support independence, and many Quebec business people—once staunch federalists—now say an independent Quebec can go it alone. Several studies, including one by Merrill-Lynch of New York, have reached the same conclusion.

Mulroney's box and Trudeau's book: Mulroney must accept much of the responsibility for the current impasse. Many question his wisdom in reopening the Pandora's box of constitutional reform. After 20 years of worrying about Quebec separatism, Canadians are weary of constitutional amendments and language debates. Mulroney's free-trade deal drove a wedge between English Canadian progressives and Quebecers, and his often exaggerated Meech Lake rhetoric has raised the stakes and created an atmosphere of national crisis. Mulroney himself is suffering from 17 percent unpopularity, according to the most recent Gallup poll.

For months provincial officials from New Brunswick have been working with the federal government on a compromise—a separate "parallel" accord which would address the concerns of Meech Lake's opponents. While the New Brunswick proposal offers hope, both sides are so entrenched in the battle that compromise now seems impossible.

"Reason over passion" has always been Trudeau's motto. The former prime minister still has the magic touch—he is cool, witty, urbane, arrogant, handsome, perfectly bilingual and aristocratic—qualities Canadians loved to hate. But as of late, Trudeau has used the launching of his new book, *Toward a Just Society: The Trudeau Years*, as a platform for a passionate attack on the accord and its architects. Ironically, Trudeau may give a boost to the accord by raising the tone of the debate. He also may remind both anglophone and francophone Canadians what they love most about the country. "In a world of civil wars, famine and brutality," wrote columnist Lysianne Cagnon of *La Presse*, "is it so bad to live in a country where the biggest problems are 'notwithstanding' clauses and constitutional preambles?"

Trudeau is a classical liberal whose views have not changed since the '50s, when his brilliant essays galvanized a generation of reformist Quebec intellectuals. His vision of a bilingual country is grounded in the rights of both French- and English-speaking individuals to be able to use their language anywhere. Modeled after Belgium's "territorial model," which Trudeau has always rejected, the objective of the Meech Lake Accord is to recognize individual communities as well as Quebec as the homeland of Canada's French.

Trudeau's individualist vision still has tremendous appeal among English Canadians, but most francophone Quebecers have moved beyond it toward Meech Lake's more realistic view. While most Quebecers wish to remain within Canada, they won't shy away from independence if it's the only way to protect their identity.

"Quebec independence doesn't frighten me," Trudeau recently told a TV interviewer. "Quebec would survive, and the rest of Canada would probably survive. But we would be destroying a damned beautiful country." □

Lawrence Kootnikoff is a Quebec-based journalist.

After 20 years of worrying about Quebec separatism, Canadians are weary of constitutional amendments and language debates.

BLOODLETTING in

TRANSYLVANIA

Dictator Nicolae Ceausescu's legacy of hate lives on.



Paul Hockenos

TIRGU MURES, ROMANIA

THE VOLATILE NATIONALISM UNLEASHED BY the overthrow of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe has claimed its first casualties.

In Romania's western Carpathian mountains, the centuries-old cycle of ethnic violence has erupted again in Transylvania, between the Romanian majority and the 2-million-strong Hungarian minority. Only three months after President Nicolae Ceausescu's downfall, street battles here last month left three ethnic Hungarians dead and 300 people injured in the worst inter-ethnic violence since 1944. With tank regiments enforcing calm in the historic Transylvanian city, mob terror, backed by Romanian nationalist parties and semi-fascist organizations, continues unabated in the region.

The conflict exposes the Bucharest government's tenuous grip on power. Historical

powers from before the era of Communist rule, as well as elements displaced or still in place from the old dictatorship, have asserted themselves for the first time, casting an ominous shadow over the prospects for a peaceful transition to democracy in Romania.

Nationalism, which Ceausescu so effectively controlled with the mechanisms of the nation-state to undermine a popular resistance movement, has now exploded in a populist form. As the new national power bases become more clear, reactionary elements appear to have nationalism not only at their call but have also proved themselves as deft at its manipulation as the former ruler.

While the recent pogroms signal a sad future ahead for Transylvanian minorities, the likelihood of a peaceful European home in Central and Eastern Europe also appears increasingly utopian. Hostile exchanges be-

tween Budapest and Bucharest have put relations at an all-time low, irreparably damaging the neighbors' short-lived reconciliation. The inflamed nationalism on both sides has stirred new fears about the inviolability of the 1945 borders, raising the specter of a dangerous Balkanization throughout the region.

The recent bloodshed occurred against the backdrop of ethnic Hungarian-Romanian antagonisms that had mounted steadily since the euphoric days when the nationalities joined forces in last December's revolt. The culture of the Hungarian minority, a quarter of Transylvania's population, had been ruthlessly suppressed by Ceausescu and his orthodox Stalinist predecessor Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej in an attempt to assimilate the minorities into a homogeneous, implicitly Romanian identity. Schools and media were shut down, the language forbidden on the street and activists persecuted. For 25 years,

the discrimination set the two peoples against one another, thwarting collective action against the dictator.

The post-revolutionary solidarity of the popular front faded quickly. The hatred that Ceausescu had invoked against Hungarian "separatists" re-emerged, as Romanians, passively encouraged by the inaction of the ruling Front for National Salvation (FNS), blocked Hungarian demands for Hungarian schools, full minority rights and cultural freedom, and the re-establishment of the Bolyai University in Cluj, the center of Hungarian culture before its merger with the Romanian university. In February, thousands of Romanian demonstrators here, chanting anti-Hungarian slogans, countered the minority's protests for equal rights.

The battle of Tirgu Mures: On March 10, the confrontation took on new dimensions when Romanians, mostly from the anti-Hungarian National Peasants Party and the ultra-

right nationalist group Vatra Romaneasca demonstrated against a city-wide Hungarian strike in the school system and rallies in solidarity with the strike. According to several eyewitnesses, the tone of the demonstration was aggressive from the start. The protesters, nearly all men, shouted, "Hungarians want to take back Transylvania!"—a reference to the rule of the Hapsburg monarchy—and "Death to László Tökés!," the Hungarian pastor from Timisoara.

When 300 Hungarians congregated outside the storefront headquarters of the Hungarian Democratic Union (HDU), the minority's representative in the local and national FNS, the demonstrators—now thousands strong—moved slowly up the hilly road toward the office, ripping down the new Hungarian street signs, one of the few visible changes of the past months. By the time the Romanians arrived, several busloads of peasants from surrounding villages had joined them and the outnumbered Hungarians scattered. The mob ransacked the building, trapping 60 HDU members in the attic, before soldiers appeared to give the Hungarians safe passage. Half a dozen people were nevertheless badly beaten as they exited the building.

Shocked by the day's events, the Hungarian community organized a peaceful demonstration of 40,000 in the cobbled main square, where fresh flowers are still laid next to wreaths in memory of the victims of the December revolution. At the march's fore was a yellow, red and blue Romanian flag, a symbol of the minority's allegiance to the Romanian nation. They demanded to speak with FNS President Ion Iliescu and called for an end to the violence.

By late afternoon, Romanian forces had amassed across the square and a showdown became inevitable. Police separated the opposing demonstrations, and 10 light Soviet tanks pulled up in front of each crowd, effectively drawing the battleline. Several hundred Gypsies, in their wide-brimmed black hats and colorful scarves, marched in, singing, "Hungarians, don't worry; the Gypsies are behind you." Stones and bottles began to fly, then Molotov cocktails, prepared from nearby gas pumps. Automobiles and tanks were ignited and then extinguished with the water hoses that each side had been using as weapons.

The fighting leveled off until 15 busloads of drunken peasants, 1,000 to 1,200 in number and armed with pitchforks, hoes and clubs, appeared at the scene. Several sources told *In These Times* that the alcohol and transportation, as well as gas remuneration, had been furnished by the Peasants Party. "The peasants didn't wait for a moment but went straight at the Hungarians," said one observer. "It was all-out chaos by then, a full-scale battle."

With Hungarians and Gypsies beaten back, the fighting subsided again. Within an hour, reinforcements arrived in the form of 400 to 600 Székely, an ethnic Hungarian people from northeastern Transylvania with medieval roots as militant tribal warriors. The majority of the city people fled as the Székely, armed with knives, and the Gypsies clashed with the Romanian peasants into the early morning hours. The fighting wrecked large parts of the city center. With the notable exception of the Peasants Party's offices, all of the political groups' headquarters were plundered.

Unholy alliances: The day's bloody chronology, which culminated in a grotesque feudal melee between warring villagers, contains the first solid evidence of the complex power struggle that has been unfolding in

Romania since the so-called revolution. Though still nebulous, the vague outline of a political dynamic, the nature of which defies Western political categories, has begun to reveal its elementary features.

Clearly, power now rests only nominally in the state apparatus, the administration of well-intentioned intellectuals and former Ceausescu underlings who slipped into the presidential palace as their old boss attempted to flee the country. The beleaguered FNS—shaken by defections and near-daily demonstrations in Bucharest—has proven to be a weak link in the constellation of nationalist and military forces that share the balance of power in Romania.

While the Front's record is by no means spotless, its leadership is the nearest thing to a progressive force in the country's democratization and Western integration. In

The bloody chronology that culminated in a grotesque feudal melee is the first solid evidence of Romania's complex new power struggle.

Tirgu Mures, it was not the persecuted Hungarians alone who suffered defeat but the Bucharest leadership as well: they were unable to assert themselves in a major domestic crisis.

Despite the FNS' strong base in the working class and early leads in pre-election polls, it appears unable to tap the country's mass psychology. The Front can only lose ground as the mediator in the Transylvania conflict. Its recent decision to grant all of the Hungarians' demands on schools and cultural rights provides the nationalists with plenty of ammunition as the May 20 election approaches.

The nationalists and reactionaries behind the rampaging peasants exerted their strength and revealed their direction for the first time in Tirgu Mures. Lurking in the interstices of the alliances among the divided army, the Securitate (Ceausescu's security police), the Peasants Party, an historical neo-Nazi party and factions of the FNS lies the newly formed Vatra Romaneasca, the populist embodiment of anti-democratic forces. Founded in February as a Romanian cultural society in affiliation with the Peasants Party, the "Cradle of Romania" is the vehicle for ultranationalist and semi-fascist elements that exist in each political power base.

The Vatra filled one aspect of the vacuum created by Ceausescu's fall and has become the instrument of the Front's destabilization. The organization's leadership consists of professionals, functionaries and Securitate who either lost their power when Ceausescu was toppled or stand to lose whatever power they still have in a multiparty democracy.

"At the top of the Vatra are the pseudointellectuals and lawyers and bureaucrats who were fully compromised in the old regime," says Nora K., a Hungarian activist who worked for years in the underground during the dictatorship and has been infiltrating Vatra meetings across the country since its inception. "They lived well in the old days, and they want that back now." She says that certain members of the Vatra hierarchy openly admit their connection to the Securitate.

The Vatra's authoritarian, chauvinistic and violent ultranationalism contains the major components of Ceausescu's unique brand of national Stalinism. The ideology's ultraright form has a broad appeal to a population raised on Ceausescu's propaganda in a country that lacks even rudimentary democratic traditions.

Up and coming: The chaos of the past months and the movement away from the accustomed structures of totalitarianism frighten many Romanians, particularly the peasants, who appear eager for a strong authority figure to restore that lost security.

With the same crude rhetoric that Ceausescu used, focusing on the Transylvania issue, the Vatra has rapidly consolidated a popular mass base—estimates range from 750,000 to 2 million—that is easily manipulated and mobilized into mass action. Since the pogrom, aggressive daily demonstrations have been staged in Tirgu Mures, Cluj, Sibiu and other smaller cities, as well as in Bucharest.

The group now organizes openly: it publishes an eight-page weekly newspaper and controls large chunks of TV time. "They consciously distort and invent information in order to provoke hatred against the Hungarians," says Romanian Marius Tabacu, editor of *The Bridge*, a publication aimed at improving ethnic Hungarian-Romanian relations. After publishing three issues since December, the newsheet has been discontinued. In light of the recent developments, Tabacu and his staff are pessimistic about the chances for inter-ethnic reconciliation.

"By equating the demands of ethnic Hungarians here with alleged territorial ambitions of Hungary, these demagogues can scare the average Romanian into thinking that the Hungarians really are separatists," explains Tabacu. "The Vatra has direct access to the big newspapers, which still employ 90 percent of the same people that they have for years. The media tells only the Vatra's version. The Hungarians are ignored."

In the bureaucracy and the armed forces support for the Vatra and like-minded extremist groups has become increasingly evident. The army, for example, stood idly by as the Tirgu Mures situation escalated out of control. Although democratic factions are active in the military—February protests staged by soldiers and officers forced the resignation of several former Securitate who had assumed or maintained top positions in the defense ministry—the old powers that worked loyally under Ceausescu remain in charge. The protests have enabled the army to remove itself from the Front's direct control, ostensibly to give it "more authority in a crisis." The new defense minister immediately announced that a new intelligence service would be set up that will be solely under the army's administration.

They made a deal: The Front is now haunted by those forces, not least the Securitate, with which it struck a deal between December 22 and 24. In order to secure its position and end the threat of civil war, the FNS appears to have granted Ceausescu's old guard, as well as the bulk of the Securitate, behind-the-scenes roles in the new apparatus. "The compromise," as Romanians call it, was covered up by the Front through its contrived distinction between the army, which fought "heroically" on the side of the people, and the Securitate, which supposedly held out for Ceausescu until it was defeated, and then was dismantled and arrested by the army.

But the truth is that many soldiers fired on demonstrators until word came from above to back the people. The Securitate held out longer but also sensed which way

the wind was blowing and laid down its rifles shortly thereafter. The elite Securitate troops, who had close relations with the upper echelons of the armed forces, simply threw in their lot with the latter.

Of the estimated 70,000 to 200,000 Securitate, only 211 have been arrested. A handful have been tried. In many areas, especially where the fighting and demonstrations were heavy, prominent Securitate were dismissed. But most of them appear to have shed their blue-gray uniforms and resumed their activities with a low profile. Telephones are still tapped, offices still occupied and mail censored. In recent weeks, the invisible men have begun to show their faces with alarming boldness. Former Securitate vehicles, easily recognized by the license plate, are now regularly driven throughout Cluj and some members are wearing their shoulder insignias on their jackets again, according to Cluj residents.

With the Vatra movement doing its bidding, the anti-democratic forces wait in the wings of Bucharest. If the Front continues to deteriorate at its present rate, the possibility of a military coup before the election—or shortly thereafter—is not out of the question.

A new kind of fear: In the meantime, an atmosphere of lynch-mob terror reigns in Transylvania. The homes of HDU leaders here have been attacked, forcing the activists underground. On March 24, Hungarian houses in a village 10 kilometers outside the city were set on fire, followed the next day by the office of the Hungarian national airlines in Bucharest.

Ethnic Hungarians say that they are currently living in a state of fear greater than that of the Ceausescu era. Children are kept home from school, and the language is again not spoken in the streets. Longtime activists, who defiantly resisted the dictatorship, giving interviews to foreign journalists at the risk of imprisonment, have now barricaded their doors to one and all.

"We had become used to a certain kind of fear. We knew where and what that danger was," explains Attila M., a Cluj math teacher. "But now I don't know what to expect. If I speak Hungarian in a movie theater, will I be attacked by a crowd? It had never come to that before."

The events have ignited a blaze of nationalism in Hungary as well, which the country's political parties have fallen over one another to capture. Even moderates have publicly questioned the future of Transylvania as part of Romania. The Hungarian parties' opportunistic reaction has only fueled anti-Hungarian sentiment in Transylvania, playing directly into the hands of extremists.

The violent logic of the nation-state threatens to take an intensified form in post-Communist Eastern Europe. Distorted under fascism, suppressed under Communism, the young and untested dynamic of the nation-state here exists in a sociopolitical context quite different from that of its Western neighbors. In the short term, post-war borders—from Silesia to Kosovo—must be acknowledged as inviolable if the continent is to avoid bloody repetitions of the past.

Yet, it is those borders themselves—all national borders—that support the structures of modern totalitarianism. With those structures in place, the limited reality of a common European house is of value primarily to Western European multinationals and Brussels' Euro-bureaucrats. □

Paul Hockenos is *In These Times*' correspondent in Eastern Europe.

EDITORIAL



A needed step toward increased democracy

Frustrated by the seeming imperviousness of the American political system to our ideas, and to what we take as the needs of the American people, some group on the left calls for a third party every few years. Inevitably, part of the argument for a new party is that the Democratic Party is under corporate control, and that to use it as a venue for left politics would inevitably lead to fatal compromises by those who succeeded in gaining office under the Democratic Party label. The two-party system—which for obvious reasons is seen as actually a one-party system by many leftists—is thus seen as the major obstacle to a viable left politics in our country.

Unfortunately, people who make this argument, like most Americans, fail to see that we already have a third party—or that we now are close to having only one party, which is neither the Democrats nor the Republicans. That party is money, most of which, of course, is in the hands of our corporate ruling class. True, office-seekers still run on Democratic or Republican tickets and there are significant differences between the two parties' constituencies and legislative policies. But where candidates were once chosen through party nomination procedures that were more or less democratic—depending on local traditions—the limited influence that working people once had has eroded along with the importance of party organizations.

Party machinery, including once-powerful urban machines, have become all but meaningless in the light of television's importance and the vast sums of personal money that individual candidates have to raise from political action committees for commercials. Even in Chicago, as senior editor David Moberg pointed out in last week's issue, the once-vaunted machine along with the rival progressive coalition were bested by a newcomer with \$2 million to spend. To win the Democratic nomination for a minor office, Richard Phelan spent a record \$1 million on TV commercials.

A dream deferred: From the earliest days of our republic, the promise of American democracy lay in the ability of the people to balance the power of wealth through participation in the political system. All of our major democratic movements have revolved around the struggle for access to the machinery of government. From the days of Andrew Jackson when propertyless workers gained the right to vote, to the women's movement of the early 20th century when women's suffrage was achieved, to the civil rights movement when blacks won the right to vote in the South, empowerment has been understood to involve participation in the political process.

The progress of the past 150 years in moving toward democracy is now being reversed. And in gut recognition of this, the public is registering a rising distaste for politics and politicians.

The extent of popular discontent with the direction of our political process is so great that even politicians are taking notice. As Rep. Mike Synar (D-OK) says, the people "don't feel like their vote counts; they don't feel that their opinion counts." The great political challenge of the '90s, he concludes, may well be: "How do you get the people plugged back in?"

And the leaders of both parties want the people to vote, if nothing else. After all, it looks very bad for the world's leading democratic nation to have a majority of those eligible to vote refusing to do so. So leaders of both parties have taken note of the widespread feeling that—in the words of the *New York Times*—"something drastic must be done to improve a political system that is dominated by empty attacks and big money and is barren of debate" on the major issues facing the nation.

A step in the right direction: Surprisingly, the leaders of both major parties seem to agree on the need to reform the use of TV in political campaigns. They suggest that broadcast and cable TV stations be required to provide free time to candidates in large enough chunks so as to permit real debate on issues. Ron Brown, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, says that free TV would curb the cost of campaigns and help cut the link between the ability to raise money and political success. And Lee Atwater, Brown's Republican counterpart, says that forcing the networks to give each presidential candidate five minutes of free time every night would force campaigns out of the swamp of photo opportunities and sound bites and onto the higher ground of real issues.

The National Association of Broadcasters, of course, adamantly opposes such proposals, claiming that they would be an unconstitutional infringement on their right to run their businesses and on the freedom of the press. But both broadcast and cable TV operate under public license because their airwaves and pathways are public property. The government can and does set the terms on which their franchises are granted, so constitutionality is really not an issue. And as historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. commented, "Why the most serious choice a democracy makes should become an occasion of private enrichment never made any sense."

A system of free TV time, even if limited to candidates for federal office, would be complex, and it would be difficult to work out an equitable process, especially if minor parties are included. But the principle is sound, and its implementation would put the United States in tune with every other major democracy, all of which now provide free airtime for candidates of various parties. This is one proposal of our political leaders that merits the active support of all who believe in democracy.

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"...with liberty and justice for all"

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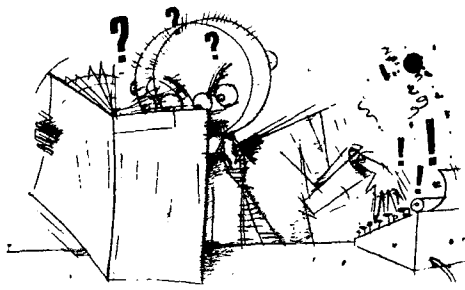
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LETTERS



Cockburn's aversion

WHEN I FIRST HEARD OF SATANIC CULTS ABUSING children, I too rejected it as the fantasy of some fundamentalist Christian fanatic. Like Alexander Cockburn (*ITT*, Feb. 14), I recognized the historical antecedents and political dangers of such stories. But I am a psychotherapist, and recently my own work forced me to consider the possibility that "ritual abuse" is real.

Hundreds of adults have now confided to psychotherapists memories of ritual abuse that they suffered as children back in the '40s, '50s and '60s. And they have told their stories naively, unaware that others across the country were telling similar stories.

Such adults describe being abused by organized groups of men and women, being sexually violated and ritually tortured (for example, with electric shock) countless times over a period of many years. They witnessed animals being butchered as an object lesson in what would happen to them if they talked. As further intimidation, they were sometimes tricked, by sleight of hand, into believing that their abusers had supernatural powers. Among the abusers were their own parents, other relatives, neighbors, doctors, priests, camp counselors and strangers.

These reports are surfacing at the same time that hundreds of children are telling similar stories about abuses they have suffered in settings ranging from private homes to day-care centers. Cockburn describes these latter allegations as "this wave of self-evidently preposterous stories." His reaction is understandable: we do not want to consider even the possibility that such events really occur. But in the face of the visible terror and profound suffering of these alleged victims, it is difficult to dismiss their accounts as lies, fantasies or hysteria.

Setting aside the religious or "satanic" elements of the stories, we have left a description of a particularly vicious form of organized crime. If we decide without serious investigation that such stories are simply too bizarre for consideration, we take the chance of averting our eyes from a monstrous evil and permitting it to continue.

Yes, there are the dangers of hysteria, sensationalism and witch hunts. But there are alternative dangers, and it helps no one to cast ritual abuse as a left-wing-vs.-right-wing issue.

Mary Shesgreen
Elgin, Ill.

Power shifts

JOAN WALSH (LETTERS, FEB. 14) MAKES AN EXCELLENT point about the phrase "female-headed families." For 16 years now I have been the single mother of an only daughter. It did not take me long to realize that every time I tried to attach a male to our family unit, the balance of power would shift radi-

cally from me to him and he would automatically become the "head" of the household. It did not matter whether or not he himself proclaimed this status, although many men do. In the eyes of the rest of society, any adult male in residence is the "head" of the family and affects its functioning in ways often detrimental to a woman and her children.

The expression "female-headed family" is not neutral but derogatory. The careless use of such terms implies that a family without an adult male needs to be marked as such and is perverse and pathological, adrift in society, pathetically longing for the day it can again put a man at the helm. My all-female family has learned that it is not like that at all, and that sometimes it's not even nice to have a man around the house.

Kathleen A. Dahl
Pullman, Wash.

Wartime militarism?

AS A LIBERTARIAN-SOCIALIST, I WILL SHED FEW tears over the defeat of Daniel Ortega. I've always considered the political left was making a big mistake by canonizing Ortega. Although the left is correct in opposing the illegal and immoral contra war, I thought we long ago came to the agreement that military fatigues and socialism do not mix.

Ortega was committed to maintaining the military-draft slavery with or without the contra war. Conscription can never be justified under any circumstance. Violeta Chamorro is correct that Nicaraguan youth belong in school, not forcibly in the military receiving (now-discredited) Marxist-Leninist indoctrination.

We socialists should encourage Chamorro to maintain the best aspects of the Sandinista reforms (land redistribution, social services) while discarding their worst side—militarism and censorship.

Richard Clark
Salem, Ind.

Following Ferency

THE PROTOTYPE FOR THE LETTER BELOW, WITH A copy of Zolton Ferency's article (*ITT*, Jan. 31), was sent to former Gov. Edmund G. Brown, chairman of the California Democratic Party. Interested readers may wish to use it and variations to send to the state chair of their preferred party.

Dear State Party Chair,

According to Professor Zolton Ferency, a unicameral state legislature, based on congressional districts, elected and voting in the legislature on the principle of propor-

tional representation, would be more reasonable, more fair, more democratic and serve the people more effectively than the present system.

We believe our present electoral system of majority-vote-takes-all is unduly controlled by and serves the special interests of corporations, while disempowering the great majority of Americans. With their dominance of political financing, lobbying and mass media, corporations, national and multinational, are capitalism's counterpart to the discredited and dismembered Communist parties of Eastern Europe. One could make the case that, at the federal level, our two-party, majority-takes-all system is incapable of transforming our corrupt, self-destructive, corporate warfare state into a law-abiding, more democratic, life-enhancing, peaceful state.

Realizing that elected officials and their supporters have a vested interest in the status quo, is there any possibility that Ferency's proposal could gain public attention, generate significant debate and actually be implemented in one or more states? Is our system exempt from the kind of radical, peaceful, democratic change we witness in Eastern Europe? I believe you are in a position to test that hypothesis. Here is our modest proposal.

1. The (state) ____ Party would seek a grant for a professional, unbiased survey of the anonymous assessment of Ferency's proposal (as published) by representative samples of the following categories in our state:

- Elected officials by party and at local, state and federal levels
- Party activists or club members
- College professors of political science and high school social-studies teachers
- Citizens, by political affiliation

2. Publicize the results.

3. Arrange for discussion and debate of the proposal within the party and the general public via television and forums.

Yours for a more democratic America,
Joan & John Citizen or Group

Nicholas V. Seidita
Northridge, Calif.

Pro-landlord

STEVEN VINCENT'S ARTICLE "ON THE EDGE: THE slowdown on New York's Lower East Side" (*ITT*, Feb. 28) provides no insight or perspective on a community struggling to retain its traditional roots. It is, rather, a gravely confused account of a neighborhood whose history of activity and social conscience is being preserved. Vincent lacks a political point of view and writes only to sensationalize and distort strongly

fought struggles for affordable housing.

Instead of saluting grass-roots efforts to build housing for the homeless living in Tompkins Square Park and elsewhere, Vincent criticizes the Lower East Side Joint Planning Council (JPC) and Community Board No. 3 (CB3). The JPC is a broad-based coalition that has steadfastly fought for the integration and development of affordable housing for more than 20 years. Its members have successfully produced more than 2,000 units of low-income housing. Why should this multiracial organization be faulted for its influence over a community board that only a few years ago was dominated by conservative whites?

Vincent never mentions the real culprit—the city administration that has attempted to exploit the increasing market pressures on Manhattan real estate to use this land for revenue-generating luxury housing. He does not mention that CB3's first units of low-income housing are now under development and will be turned over to a community-controlled non-profit mutual housing association later this spring. To criticize CB3, he quotes one member of the 50-person board, that one being the sole spokesperson for landlords on the board, a class she proudly represents.

Lisa Kaplan
Member, CB3 and JPC
New York

Learning

HAVING JUST SEEN THE DOCUMENTARY FILM *Roger and Me*, I would like to suggest that it be made compulsory viewing for East Europe.

In another vein, I wish to compliment you on your editorial on the invasion of Panama (*ITT*, Jan. 17). I had just come upon the following by Walter Savage Lendora from his *A Foreign Ruler*, published in 1863:

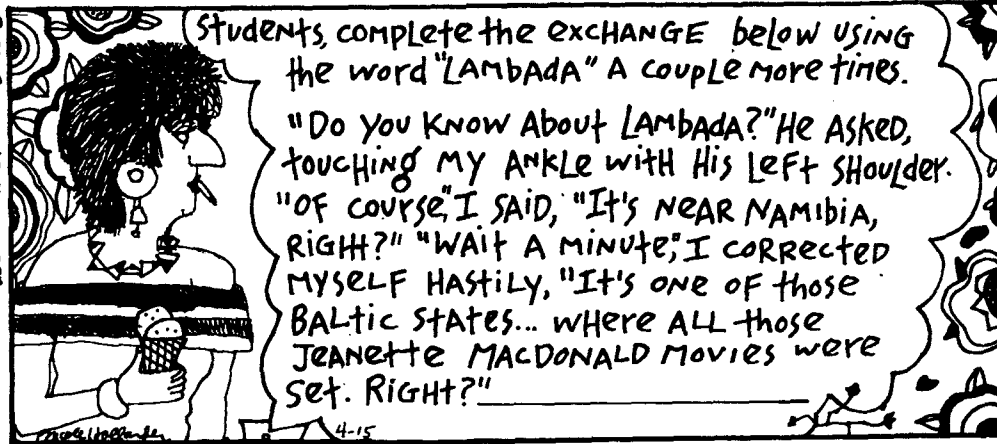
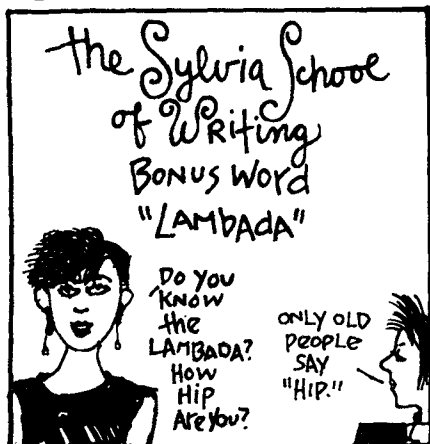
*He says, my reign is peace, so slays
a thousand in the dead of night.
Are you all happy now? he says,
And those he leaves behind cry quite.
He swears he will have no contention,
And sets all nations by the ears;
He shouts aloud, No intervention!
Invades, and drowns them all in tears:
Imperialism is the same old thing. How
many are learning this?*

Martha J. Fields
South Bend, Ind.

Editor's note: Please keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

by Nicole Hollander

SYLVIA



By David Thelen

OUTSIDERS HAVE LONG IMPOSED FANTASIES on the realities of life in Nicaragua that range from imperial ambitions to political dreams to psychological needs. What I saw as Official Observer No. 2049 of the recent election forced me to confront—and discard—many expectations and fantasies that I had brought with me. My listening post was in Posoltega (sister city to Bloomington, Ind.), where I was a member of a Sister Cities team that observed the election in 40 Nicaraguan communities.

Posoltega is an official "municipality" of some 20,000 people located 100 miles—three hours on the back of a pickup truck—north of Managua. About a third of the people live in the village. The other two-thirds live among the surrounding banana, cotton, sugar and coffee fields.

Sandinismo has transformed Posoltega. Before the revolution there was one school; now there are 13. Before the revolution there was no health care; now there is a clinic, a doctor who comes several times a week from Chinandega and two outlying health-delivery posts. Before the revolution there were no unions or women's organizations; now the union shapes work at the huge private coffee plantation. AMNLAE, the Sandinistas' women's organization, created the pre-school and lunch program that feeds the poorest kids. Sandinistas run community gardens where vegetables yield self-sufficiency. Sandinista organizations manage adults' baseball leagues and distribute musical instruments for children's bands.

Although there are differences, some of them deep, in style, personality and priorities among the groups and individuals who proudly carry the name of Sandino into their community-organizing work, I have rarely worked with such dedicated people as Orbelina Meyrena, Rolando Peralta, Rigoberto Rodriguez, Elba Aguilera, Juan Tercero and Julia Martinez.

Soon after we arrived in Posoltega we learned that the election was about things much more subtle than which party or ideology would govern Nicaragua. Julia and Julio Martinez—she teaches school and he works on a banana plantation—began my unlearning while they welcomed me as their guest. Julia was going to be a Sandinista poll watcher on election day, but she said that she would accept a victory by Violeta

What I saw at Nicaragua's election: voting for a new kind of democracy

Chamorro and UNO or by Daniel Ortega and the Frente. Both, she said, inspired confidence among Nicaraguans for their participation in the struggle against the Somozas and for their present determination to bring peace and reconciliation. On the flight from Miami to Managua I had talked with a Shell employee who supported UNO but would welcome a FSLN victory.

To UNO and FSLN supporters alike, the election was less an occasion to choose a president than an opportunity to create national reconciliation around a shared yearning for peace and democracy. Both parties wanted peace and relief from the American embargo that cut off shipments of parts for tractors in Posoltega and markets for the coffee, bananas and sugar that are grown or milled in the vicinity. Many Sandinistas understood their neighbors voted for UNO because they believed that the American government is so imperial and so obsessed that it would end the war and embargo only if UNO won. UNO's most popular plank was its pledge to end the draft. (Ortega lost votes in Posoltega for failing to renounce the draft.) Other Posolteganos believed that only the Frente had the political will and strength to resist American pressure, and they voted FSLN.

Doing what they could: The Sandinistas contributed to the conviction that the election itself was more important than its outcome for the future of democracy in Nicaragua. Two years ago, during my last visit, Frente leaders spoke of the dreams they could fulfill if only the war ended. This time they still dreamed, but many had replaced confidence in a revolutionary future with pride in a democratic present. The election was an achievement within their reach, while only Washington could end the war. As Sandinista organizations had empowered workers and women, so the election empowered citizens. Even in defeat Ortega would claim the election as a Sandinista triumph.

In Posoltega, both UNO and FSLN supporters turned the election into an affirmation of democracy that transcended party loyalty and aimed at national reconciliation. Four days before the election, UNO and FSLN representatives joined the coordinator of elections to draft a "Com-

municado de Partidos Politicos" that called on all Posolteganos to renounce all forms of violence and to preserve the integrity of the electoral process itself as the highest goal. Americans who observed the voters on election day—as I did at nine precincts from the village up to the mountains—were amazed by the determined, proud looks on the faces of voters as they waited patiently in very long lines for their moment to vote. They emerged from behind the cardboard and plastic curtains after marking the three 8-by-14-inch sheets and seemed to be asserting that the moment of triumph came not when the votes were counted but when they pushed one ballot each into the cardboard boxes labeled for the presidency, assembly and municipal elections.

This popular affirmation of democracy and reconciliation was clearly not a rejection of "totalitarian" government. The proof? On the morning after the election, the streets of Posoltega were unusually deserted. And in the privacy of their homes (which were easy to observe since the doors are open to increase ventilation) no one was celebrating. Even in Managua that afternoon we encountered few celebrators. We did encounter people who had regretted their votes for UNO. Some explained that they could best affirm the full democratic potential of the experience by voting against the Frente and giving it the opportunity to prove its full commitment to democracy—a transfer of power could best fulfill the logic of turning the election itself into a democratic accomplishment. Only in the cold morning light, when democratic logic turned to political defeat, did they regret their votes.

The happy ones: Although we found few celebrators in Posoltega or Managua, we were inundated by them on the plane back to Miami. They wore fancy suits. They had flown to Nicaragua just to vote. One guy chanted, "UNO, UNO, UNO!" Another praised Somoza. Still another pledged to "crush" the Frente. At the Miami airport we found dozens of cheering, dancing Nicaraguans for whom the election promised something very different than for the UNO voters who remained in Nicaragua.

There will be a struggle for Nicaragua's

soul, for UNO's soul, between the wealthy exiles and former Somocistas who want to enthrone their interests and ideologies and the UNO people we encountered in Posoltega. Chamorro and UNO hold within themselves energies and visions, not to mention interests and ideologies, that point them in both directions. And that is why Nicaragua totters on a precarious brink between unprecedented peace and intensified war.

If the Posolteganos we encountered have their way, the election will become the base for a new phase in the democratic movement the Sandinistas launched. On the morning after the election, Mayor Rolando Peralta pulled up on his motorcycle. He was disappointed, he said, but not greatly alarmed. The FSLN had faced many setbacks since Augusto Sandino had launched the popular struggle against the imperial forces of oppression and occupation over a half-century earlier. This time the Frente had grass-roots organizations in place. There could be no reversing of the revolutionary social and political base in communities like Posoltega. The Sandinistas would be by far the largest single party in parliament. UNO would soon disintegrate, and some of its components would form a de facto coalition government with the Sandinistas.

"All we lost was the presidency," Peralta said. And that was an office they could easily recover six years hence by doing a better job of organizing. Through its grass-roots base in places like Posoltega the FSLN expects to "govern from below," as Ortega would later put it, even when UNO sets national policies. If parts of UNO share de facto power with the Sandinistas, I can readily imagine a political shape of Nicaragua that will feature pluralistic politics at the top (which really began with this election) and social democracy at the local level that will emerge from the thick layers of Sandinista groups and innovations that exist in every community. And in Posoltega, incoming UNO officials plan to support many of the most popular Sandinista community programs.

Peralta did believe that the mood of reconciliation could collapse into war if the contras were not adequately neutralized. Posolteganos remember that the contras have killed 126 of their townspeople over the past decade, in what the U.S. government calls "low intensity" warfare. Many see the creation of a friendly and responsive military to replace the hated Somocista Guardias as the Sandinistas' major achievement. (People who compare the visibility and behavior of the Sandinista army and police with their counterparts in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Panama share that enthusiasm.) Nicaraguans urgently need to be left alone to create a new military that will permit the new executive to assume some control over the police and army while reassuring the Sandinistas that the new military does not become the old contras and Guardias.

The key to reconciliation is to allow the people of places like Posoltega to continue the processes unleashed in this election. In the same way that the Sandinistas forged new forms of democracy against the full weight of the empire, we must now allow Nicaraguans to invent new kinds of democracy and reconciliation in the political environment ahead.

David Thelen is editor of the *Journal of American History*.

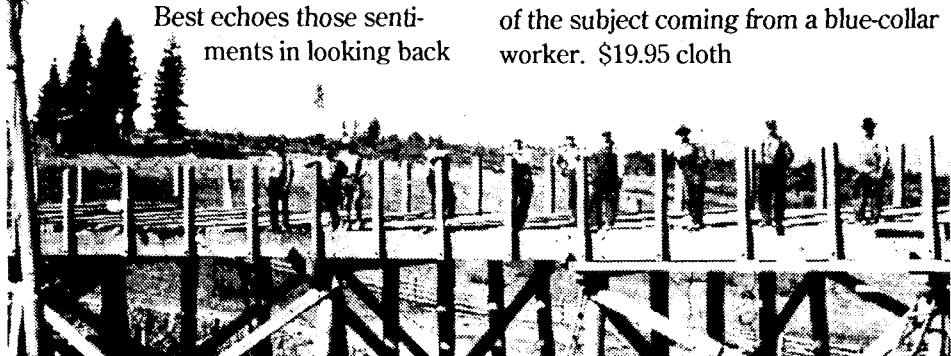
A Celebration of Work

By Norman Best

Edited, with an introduction, by William G. Robbins

"Be in love with your work," said comedian George Burns when asked his secret of his longevity. Norman Best echoes those sentiments in looking back

on a lifetime of labor, the rewards and frustrations and ultimate meaning of it. *A Celebration of Work* is a unique study of the subject coming from a blue-collar worker. \$19.95 cloth



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The bogus row

The grotesque limits imposed in this country on discussion of Israel and Palestinian rights can be tested by looking at recent commentary by the conservative columnist William Safire and by the liberal *Nation* magazine.

Safire is the most strident journalistic exponent in the United States of the positions associated with Gen. Ariel Sharon. (His only rival in rabid utterance on these matters is another *New York Times* commentator, A. M. Rosenthal.) For Safire, any negotiation with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is anathema. Any indication by the U.S. government that Israel might be anything less than faultless is furiously denounced.

A typical Safire column appeared in the *Times* for March 26. In it the former Nixon speechwriter advanced the proposition that President Bush is the most anti-Israel president since the foundation of the state in 1948. "Mr. Bush," Safire fumed, "has long resisted America's special relationship with Israel. His secretary of state, James Baker, delights in sticking it to the Israeli right."

Now let us turn to *The Nation*, usually (though absurdly) taken as being stationed at the outer left-liberal limits of political discourse in this country.

In an editorial published in its March 26 issue and entitled "One Tiny Step," *The Nation* told its readers that the Bush administration deserved praise for having engineered a situation in which Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's election plan might now be implemented.

On the face of it, Safire and *The Nation* seem miles apart, the former bellowing accusations of betrayal, the latter judiciously congratulating Bush and Baker for skilled diplomacy in seeking a just settlement in the region.

The trouble is that both Safire and *The Nation* hold in common a central error: they take seriously both the Shamir Plan and the notion that the Bush administration is pushing Israel towards what *The Nation* would call compromise and Safire denounce as self-destruction.

A second illusion shared by both parties is that the Israeli Labor Party is somehow likely to lead Israel toward recognition of Palestinian rights, a prospect viewed by Safire with horror and by *The Nation* with faint bleats of cautious encouragement.

First, what is the Shamir Plan?

Its three "Basic Premises"—as the Israeli government's text of the plan calls them—are as follows. One, there can be no "additional Palestinian state in the Gaza district and in the area between Israel and Jordan." The word "additional" here refers to Shamir's position that there is already a Palestinian state in Jordan. Two, "Israel will not conduct negotiations with the PLO." Three, "there will be no change in the status of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza other than in accordance with the basic guidelines of the government."

Thus, in these sentences of exemplary clarity, the plan states that Israel envisages no change in present territorial arrangements and, by proposing elections within the territories and excluding East Jerusalem, seeks Palestinian ratification of Israel's occupation.

Next question: is Shamir's plan different from what either the Bush administration or the Israeli Labor Party are proposing? The answer is no. Despite Safire's claims

ASHES & DIAMONDS

By Alexander Cockburn



Israeli leader Yitzhak Shamir

that Secretary of State James Baker dreams of a Palestinian state, Baker has stated consistently that a Palestinian state is out of the question. As he told the *Times* last October, "Our goal all along has been to try to assist in the implementation of the Shamir initiative. There is no other proposal or initiative that we are working with."

The official Labor Party plan is epitomized in its notorious "four nos": no return to 1967 borders, no removal of a settlement, no negotiations with the PLO, no Palestinian state. Any difference between this and Shamir's Plan is cosmetic.

The illusions about the position of the Bush administration may be traced back to the success of the *intifada* in focusing the world on the plight of Palestinians. It was clear to both Israeli and U.S. policy makers that some "movement," however illusory, had to take place.

Reagan's secretary of state, George Shultz, duly announced that direct talks between the U.S. and the PLO could commence, since Yasser Arafat had moderated his stance. Shamir came forward with his plan.

Prominent Israelis readily admitted that the famous plan was designed purely to buy time to put down the *intifada* and take the pressure off Israel. Yitzhak Rabin, the Labor defense minister in Shamir's coalition, was quoted in February 1989, by the Hebrew-language newspaper *Yedioth Ahronot* as saying the U.S.-PLO dialogue would be "low level," that the Americans "do not seek any solution" and "will grant us at least a year" to crush the *intifada* and "in the end, they will be broken."

For its part, the PLO was mouse-trapped. Arafat had in fact refused to include in his famous recognition statement, approved by Shultz, any promise of ending the *intifada* (i.e., surrendering the right of resistance to occupying powers) or of accepting U.N. Resolution 242 without the U.N. riders giving Palestinians the right to self-determination. But the U.S. government and the U.S. press simply said that he had and then promptly began the new "dialogue" by calling on Arafat to stop the *intifada*. Moving from one position of weakness to another, Arafat now praises Baker and Bush for being in the first U.S. government that "speaks of the end of the Israeli occupation."

But the U.S. government has done nothing of the sort and has been explicit on the matter. With full U.S. agreement, Soviet Jews—who now do most certainly have a justified fear of persecution in the Soviet Union from anti-Semitic nationalists—are denied the basic right of any refugee to choose a sanctuary and instead are transported to Israel. The U.S. still finances illegal settlements on the West Bank and, beyond this, underwrites the whole military occupation.

While William Safire and *The Nation* adopt their symbolic postures and engage in symbolic pillow fights, the real narrative unwinds in all its savagery in Israel and the territories. Terror against Palestinians continues undiminished, under the view expressed by Rabin that the *intifada* can be broken. Inside Israel itself, the rights of non-Jews are being narrowed.

The Knesset has reiterated its belief that the constitution of the state enshrines rights for Jews alone, and the high court has interpreted the law as banning any political party or legislation asserting equal rights for Arab citizens of Israel: "It is necessary to prevent a Jew or Arab who calls for equality of rights for Arabs from sitting in the Knesset or being elected to it." A high court justice was quoted to this effect, with three of the remaining four in essential agreement. (See Israeli press for December 15, 27.)

As recounted by Professor Israel Shahak, human-rights activist in Israel, in the March issue of *Z* magazine, Defense Minister Rabin in a rabbinic meeting "counted the percentages of Jews and of strangers—this was the very expression that he used—in the land of Israel. In the percentages of strangers he counted all Palestinians of the territories but also all Palestinians of Israel. Druses too. Everyone who is not a Jew is a stranger, a person to be suspected, hated, a person who—the ideal here is that he or she will not be here."

This is the reality beneath all the talk about plans or compromises. The only opposition to the intent of Rabin as revealed by his use of the word "strangers" is being carried forward by the Palestinians on the West Bank and in Gaza, in the third year of an *intifada* infinitely more courageous than the uprisings everyone in the U.S. has been

so busy praising in Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union.

Suppose there had been a "Honecker Plan" or a "Ceausescu Plan" for power-sharing or for political compromise? Everyone would have denounced them as shams, designed to buy time for repressive forces to regroup. Now listen again to Professor Shahak: "About the [majority] of the Israeli society [outside the 15 percent or so supporting individual, not national, rights for Palestinians] don't have any illusions. Whatever its division is, about Westernization or return to Judaism, it will only retreat when it is forced to. Forced. I include all the complex of compulsions—economic, political, military. But without such a compulsion, to suppose that the great majority of Israelis, at least 80 percent or more, will retreat an inch because of any formula Palestinians make, any concession, any agreement, any declaration—is to deceive yourself. As our satirists are saying, even if Arafat should convert to Orthodox Judaism and arrive in Jerusalem singing 'Hatikvah' [the Israeli national anthem]—nothing will follow."

Safire and the others who now charge Bush and Baker with being PLO lovers know perfectly well that nothing could be further from the truth. What they fear is something that is not yet properly on the mainstream agenda: a real response inside the U.S. to the *intifada*, a political movement, insisting on rights for Palestinians, that would shove the U.S. government into real confrontation with Israel on its obduracy. At the moment *The Nation's* talk of "Tiny Steps" of progress merely fulfills Shamir's and Rabin's time-wasting agenda and is as misleading as the ravings of Safire. ■

CALL FOR PAPERS

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To submit a proposal or obtain more information, write: Dr. Gregory Mantsios, the center for Labor and Society, Queens College, 65-30 Kissena Blvd., Flushing, N.Y. 11367. Deadline for proposals May 1, 1990.

Revolution at the Table: The Transformation of the American Diet

By Harvey Levenstein
Oxford University Press
275 pp., \$29.95

By Pete Karman

Eater's digest culinary class

FOOD

EARLY IN THIS CENTURY, FOR THE most obvious of reasons, the rich tended to be fat and the poor skinny. President William Howard Taft was twice the Republican (by weight) that President George Bush is. At nearly 200 pounds, actress Lillian Russell was the reigning model of pulchritude. Nowadays, by contrast, the wealthy guide their pursuits by the rule that one can never be too rich or too thin, while roly-poly Roseanne and her hefty husband are deemed characteristic of the working class.

The slimming of the rich and the fattening of the poor is one of the most visible aspects of the radical transformation of the American diet that took place between 1880 and 1930. In this well-prepared and filling stewpot of solid research and pungent comment, Harvey Levenstein, a historian at McMaster University in Ontario, ranges the social landscape to make some sense of that transformation.

Right from the start, he takes note of the perennial observation by foreigners that we Americans too often tend to be both gluttonous and indifferent at the table. We eat a lot without taking much pleasure in either food itself or in dining as a social

act. For this, says Levenstein, we must blame the British, whose bland vittles laid the basis of our national diet; and democracy, which led us to disdain the elitism of haute cuisine; as well as the abundance afforded by our vast fertile country.

Whether they were seeking freedom or gold, immigrants to America found grub and plenty of it. Unlike much of the world, Americans have

known, at worst, hunger rather than starvation. Maldistribution and unhealthy ways of eating rather than shortage have been our sore points. What amazed early immigrants was the ubiquity of meat, a food they rarely saw in 19th-century Europe and Asia.

Forbidden spices: Until the latter years of that century, meat and sweet were mainstays of the American palate. The greasiness of highly salted roasts and fatback was cut by sugary desserts. Spices weren't much used because it was thought they stimulated the yen for alcohol and sex. Fresh vegetables and fruits were only seasonally available. Women were enslaved first by the hearth and later by iron stoves that required endless refueling and cleaning.

Railroads and industrialization triumphed over distance and climate by putting Iowa beef and California peaches on tables from coast to coast.

The general-store cracker barrel gave way to packages of Uneeda biscuits. Urbanization created a vast market for restaurants and prepared foods. And then there was sci-

Americans eat a lot without taking much pleasure in food.

ence—in particular, the beginnings of research into nutrition.

America's early nutritionists, working within a triumphant business culture, came up with a notion that seemed both sensible and useful to employers. The poor and working classes, they said, should use their food dollars more efficiently by buying cheaper cuts of meat and otherwise preparing their meals more economically. Of course, that way

they wouldn't need higher wages. A movement to teach the new nutrition to the poor was attempted by scientists such as Wilbur Atwater, who organized the first Department of Agriculture nutritional labs, and some of the more philanthropically minded among the wealthy. Experimental community kitchens were established, mostly in the Northeast. But these eventually foundered when the poor, especially recent immigrants, stuck resolutely to their own food preferences.

The lesson to the new nutritionists was to spread their gospel to the better educated and more prosperous classes with the hope that their example would encourage their lessers. Here the results were somewhat better, and the basis was laid for the ongoing American middle and upper classes' preoccupation with eating for good health.

Prohibition, Levenstein tells us, was hell for the wine-centered French cuisine that had cachet among the rich, but heaven for the restaurant trade in general. Before the constitutional ban on alcohol, public eateries tended to be male bastions where the bar was usually busier than the kitchen and paintings of naked women were a popular item of decor.

Unable to sell highly profitable booze, restaurants remodeled and invited the family in. But whether they styled themselves Italian or Asian, whether they used Chianti bottles for lamps or draped the walls to resemble exotic locales, they generally served the standard American meat-and-potatoes dishes. Meanwhile, cafeterias, luncheonettes and similar fast-food establishments began to take hold.

But these are just appetizers from Levenstein's well-laden table. Eating, he shows us, is not just a matter of fuel or fancy but a key social nexus. In this fascinating book he gracefully manages to trace the lines of class, habit, culture, urbanization, mass-market economics and science that meet in odd and endlessly changing combinations whenever we put food to our mouths. Read it and reap. ■



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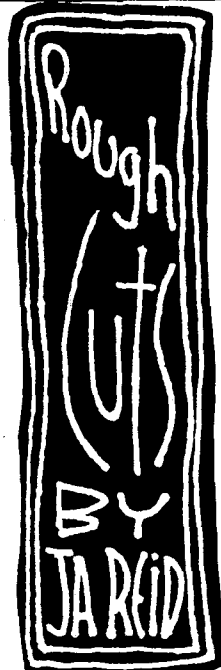
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Appetite for Change: How the Counterculture Took on the Food Industry, 1966-1988
By Warren J. Belasco
Pantheon, 312 pp., \$24.95

By Daniel Harris

Counterculture co-opted by back-to-the-bland industry

ASIDE FROM THE STUDIEDLY casual mannerisms of an era now fossilized in urban "cool," the social ideals of the counterculture didn't really change the habits of the rank and file.

And yet in one crucial aspect, the daily lives of mainstream Americans were dramatically affected: we continue to chew, swallow, digest and, in Warren Belasco's jaundiced view, void the '60s in such Aquarian staples as yogurt, tofu, herbal teas, bulk grains, alfalfa sprouts, sunflower seeds and whole-wheat bread. Within the last 10 years we have even raised a kind of vegetarian necropolis for the counterculture in McDonald's and Burger King: their new and highly successful salad bars stand like tombstones for the most concrete and irreversible achievements of another era's culinary activism.

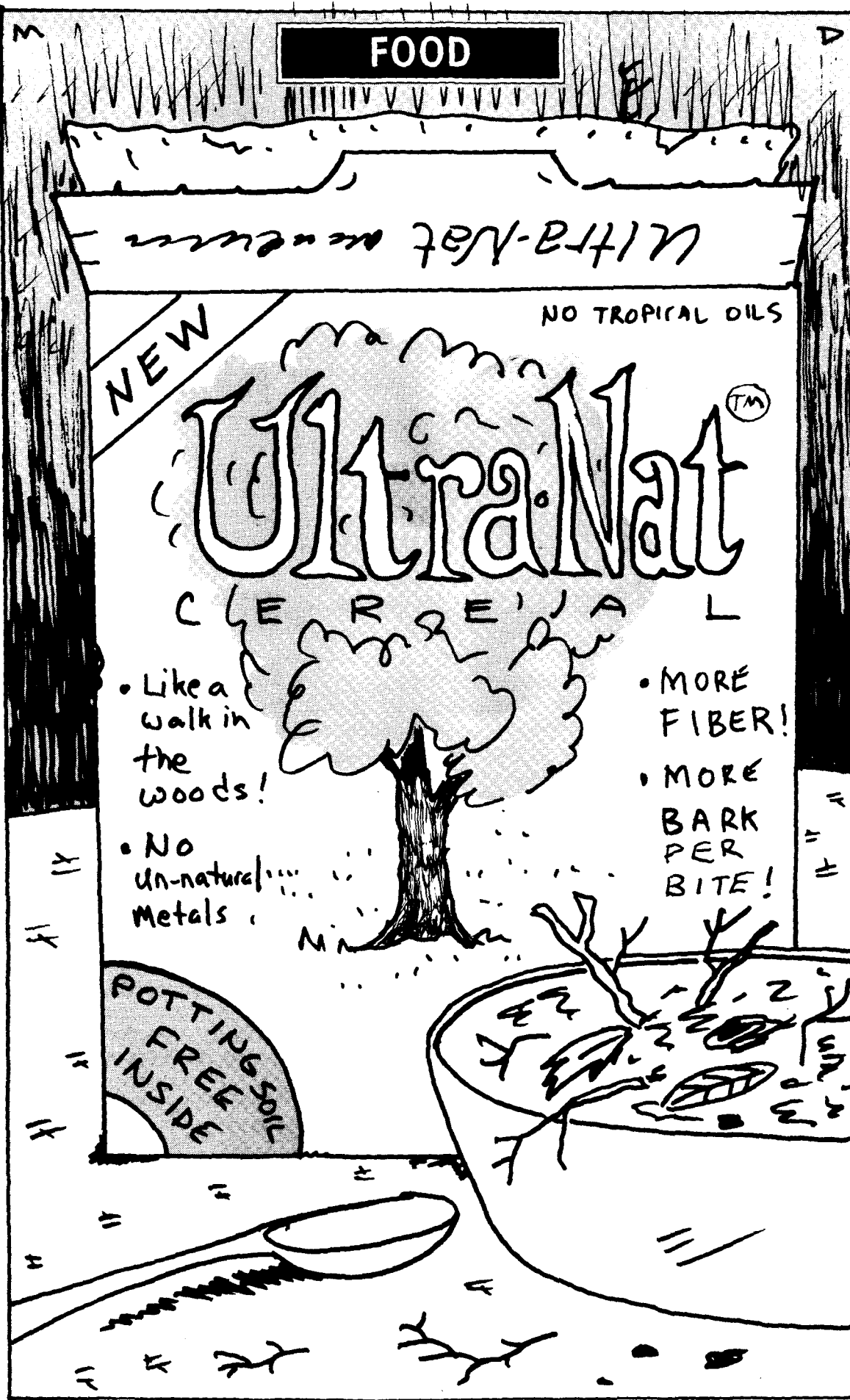
Were the changes the "countercuisine" effected in our eating habits real or just cosmetic forms of cooptation? Did the revolution of "roots and twigs," as health food was often disparaged, have any lasting impact on Kellogg, Kraft, Nabisco, Pillsbury or any of the other major food conglomerates that continue to fork out their rancid fodder of nitrates, hydrolyzed glutamates, cyclamates or aspartame?

Is it true that the "counterculture took on the food industry," as Belasco seems to suggest in his book's subtitle, or was it itself taken in, aped but not imitated in innocuous new wrappers and artful grammatical dodge that de-fanged the health-food movement's attempt to revolutionize both how we cook and what we eat?

Counterculture vultures: There is a distinct and oppressive sense of the past tense in the way Belasco evokes the utopian ideals once promoted at the consciousness-raising "feeds" of the San Francisco Diggers or the communal kitchens of The Farm in Oregon. His readable new study, *Appetite for Change*, provides an excellent if disenchanted look at an epoch in food history that has now fizzled out into earth-toned packaging and token gestures.

In his view, the treasonable culinary principles of the back-to-nature movement, so alarming initially to corporate America, have gone up in linguistic smoke in nauseous buzzwords like "old fashioned"—the meaningless slogans of the Quainte Yc Olde Schoole of false advertising.

What began as a frontal assault on the food establishment has been domesticated in products that essentially allow big business to appropriate the murky, anti-modernistic aura of health foods without making the radical overhaul of production and distribution so necessary to create a safer and more palatable cuisine.



At times, Belasco feels, the corporate sleight of hand has been unconscionably callous. In the '70s Kellogg's old war-horse Sugar Smacks,

Did the "roots and twigs" revolution have a lasting impact on any of the major food conglomerates?

which was composed of 43 percent grain and 57 percent refined sugar, was rechristened Honey Smacks, which was now composed of 43 percent grain, 50 percent refined sugar and a measly 7 percent honey. Kraft, for its part, is so shamelessly opportunistic that it has pitched the clammy, gelatinous slabs of Velveeta as a sumptuous "blend of natural cheeses."

Health-food chic: In 1984, Kraft purchased Celestial Seasonings from its founder, a hip Boulder entrepreneur, in order to blaze the trail for its entry into the health-food

market. By 1987, the experiment was an unqualified failure, and Kraft attempted unsuccessfully to palm off on Lipton this useless anachronism, which it had acquired to help counter its reputation for bland processed food.

Belasco's image of this swollen conglomerate casting out its feelers to ensnare an established cache of health-food chic provides a clear idea of how housebroken the countercuisine had become by the Reagan era, a useful lode of nostalgia and wholesomeness that canny marketers could mine for the profit of

their corporations.

But the process of assimilation, as Belasco makes clear, was anything but swift and painless. The approximately 20 years that proceeded Kraft's emblematic takeover were characterized by rancor, reform, hysteria and plain fraud. As the burgeoning health industry started chipping away at the confidence of the American public in the safety of its food supply, panic ensued among the major processors. They enlisted federal apologists at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration to pacify fears not only about pesticides but about the grisly feast of insect fragments, rat feces and larvae in processed foods.

What followed was a concerted effort on the part of big business and government to marginalize health-food "extremists" as "food McCarthys" and whacked-out Chicken Littles maliciously bent on destroying legitimate business interests.

Repositioning wholesomeness:

Belasco explains that the food establishment in the late '60s and early '70s assuaged fears about modern food chemistry by popularizing two contradictory ideas: first, that everything is "natural" because everything from bulgur wheat to DDT can be broken down into the same elemental atoms and molecules; and, second, that even so, technology was superior to nature, which, unsprayed, untreated, unchecked, couldn't begin to sustain the needs of the world's growing population. In this way, they held Americans' newfound fears of the grocery store in cautious abeyance, all the while subtly repositioning their own products to reflect the new mandate for purity, wholesomeness and "naturalness."

Belasco presents the story of this wholesale appropriation of one major aspect of the counterculture intelligently and entertainingly. He writes clear, lively prose and deftly analyzes the complex matrix of tributary influences that have shaped our perception of food over the last two decades. In the course of his discussion, he shows how the counterculture's hostility to intellectual discourse led to a treacherous vagueness of rhetoric, with oppositional terms like "natural" vs. "plastic" or "organic" vs. "commercial" dissolving into fragile linguistic talismans.

It was precisely this vagueness that led to the health-food movement's easy cooptation by big business, which simply mimicked its slogans in meaningless phrases like "country fresh" and "whole-wheat goodness." Had the counterculture been more specific in its use of the expression "health foods," Belasco maintains that the destruction of meaningful distinctions between "natural" and "processed" would not have been so instantaneous or categorical and that the ideals of food activism would not have declined so rapidly into lifeless clichés of advertising copy.

Daniel Harris is a writer living in San Francisco.

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Willy Coyote Assembles Kit Woman by Beverly Kedzior

By John Stevenson

SisterSerpents' hiss and hers

ACCORDING TO THE MEMBERS OF Chicago's SisterSerpents, a lot of women's art and women's exhibitions are decorative, aesthetic, nice—just what they don't want. SisterSerpents is a feminist art/action group that's been plastering large parts of the city with their posters and stickers for the past nine months. They now have an exhibit at Chicago Filmmakers called "Rattle Your Rage." It includes works by 32 artists from around the country and is subtitled "Women's Views of Their Oppressors."

It's intended, according to the show's sponsors, to be angry, threatening and jolting. "We want people to be upset," says one of the group, whose members generally prefer to remain anonymous. And the show has proved to be upsetting to many people, not always in ways that SisterSerpents seems to have anticipated.

One controversial aspect is the *Fetus Wall*, an area festooned with large pictures of fetuses which have been altered to exhibit spikey teeth and sinister eyes; one of them has a cigarette dangling from its lips and some hold American flags. A backdrop is provided by the SisterSerpent "Fuck a Fetus" poster, with which the wall is papered. It is headlined: "For all you folks who consider a fetus more valuable than a woman." The 19-by-24-inch poster depicts a fairly mature fetus on a black background amid mocking admonitions: "Have a fetus cook for you"—"Have a fetus affair"—"Go to a fetus house to ease your sexual

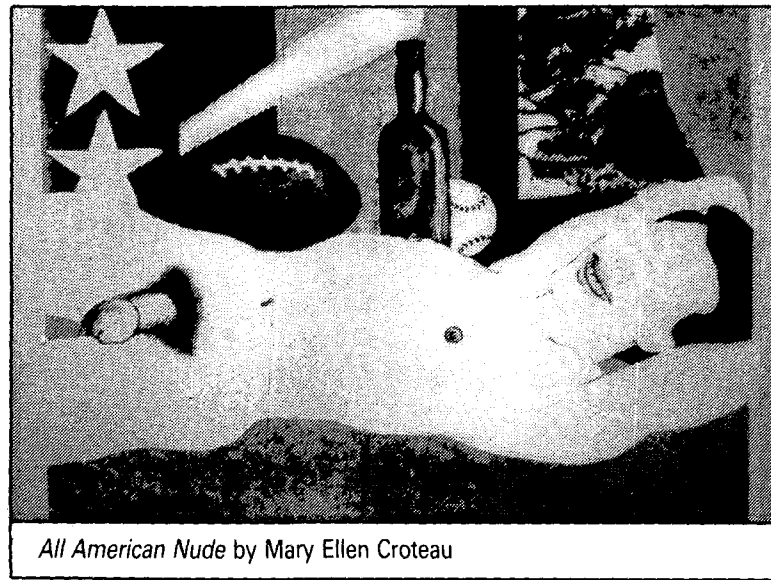
frustration." Large lettering on the wall spells it out: "Down With Fetal Supremacy."

Fetus worship: One of the group, in a sort of official statement, explains why they put things this way: "Our poster points to the current fanaticism we call 'fetus worship,' which preposterously elevates a fertilized egg to the status of 'unborn child' and relegates women to the role of parasitical host." Some feminists feel the poster targets the fetus itself, or at least takes the right-lifers too much on their own terms, seemingly validating their professed concern for the unborn.

For its creators, such criticisms miss the poster's mocking humor.

The *Fetus Wall* also aroused the anxiety of Brenda Webb, director of Chicago Filmmakers, who not only found the poster "personally offensive" but feared the exhibit might offend those who attend the regular film showings and readings in the space. At first she proposed covering the offending wall with a sheet during Filmmakers programs, but finally she settled for a notice disclaiming any "direct involvement or curatorial input of anyone affiliated with Chicago Filmmakers" in the exhibit.

Other pieces by artists in the show



All American Nude by Mary Ellen Croteau

are more calculated to jolt men. *Off With Their Heads: Revenge for Rape*, by Maria Epes, for example, is a small multimedia assemblage that shows, on a piece of slate, three somewhat abstract figures on their knees, hands bound, penises out on a block

ART

in front of them, with the heads of said organs having just been cut off. Another piece by the same artist, titled *Misandrony*, has a man tied, spread-eagled on a branch. "If you look out into the world and see what men really do in every culture, exceptions excluded," Epes says in an accompanying statement. "I ask, how could women not develop a hatred of men?"

Humor and rage: These sorts of artist's statements, explaining and commenting on their work, accompany almost all the pieces in the show. Nor is everything grim. Some of the participants use humor to make their points. *Boner*, by Ashley Owens, for instance: a bone, numbered ("an archeological reference," she explains) cast in bronze, sticking up at a suggestive angle from the base in which it's anchored. Or *Pirate Jennys Run Amok*, an oil painting by Jeremy Turner depicting a pirate ship, women "manning" it, the ship itself in the shape of a large pink pudgy male figure.

Others comment not directly on society but on the world of art—notably two monoprints by Mary Ellen Croteau, nicely altered versions of famed pictures by Balthus and Tom Wesselman, intended to demonstrate their "underlying patriarchal assumptions."

And there are many others, varying vastly in artistic style and means of expression. There are also great variations (to my eye, at any rate) in aesthetic quality. The common denominator is the tone and the message: outrage at the oppression of women, expressed with great fervor. The theme is reinforced by the great variety of posters, newspaper clippings and slogans interspersed among the artwork. There are columns by "Dear Abby" and one by Alexander Cockburn from *In These Times* (February 14), along with replies by SisterSerpents. "Women Will Not Be Tolerant Any Longer," is spelled out in letters on another wall, under which are snakes saying things such as, "Whistling, hissing and woofing at women are forms of rape."

It is, in other words, an unabashedly agitational art show. Formalism, nuance and ambiguity are out; a militant political content reigns supreme. The purpose, the collective says, is "to liberate women and threaten misogynist men."

The same theme was evoked in a film and panel discussion at the show's March 16 opening. The film, R.W. Fassbinder's *Bremer Freiheit* (Freedom in Bremen), recounts the

story of a woman who poisoned 15 people. The panel included Leslie Brown, an Illinois woman who served seven years for the contract killing of her husband and who described some of the ways that her husband had brutalized and threatened her. After relating how police and courts had refused to help and citing statistics on battery and murder of women by husbands and lovers, Brown declared that if she had it all to do over again, rather than have her husband killed, "I would kill him myself."

Resurgent art power: Also on the panel were Jonathan Rosenbaum, film critic for the *Chicago Reader*, who talked a bit about Fassbinder and feminism in film, and Lynne Warren, associate curator at Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art, who related the exhibit to constructivism and other pre-World War II trends before the advent of high modernism, as well as to a contemporary situation in which art "is beginning to have power again" after the hermeticism of the '70s and '80s. Although the show doesn't meet today's standards aesthetically, Warren said, that's because those standards adhere to a dogmatic, reductionist, male paradigm.

Jeremy Turner, the SisterSerpent "spokesnake" on the panel, after quoting Hitler on art as the "handmaiden of sublimity" and citing Bertolt Brecht on its more properly anti-cathartic and people-changing function, replied to accusations of propagandistic art: "We say, what difference does it make? We have important things to say, and art is a magnificent way to say them."

The chief controversy at the crowded forum, however, came not from outraged males or the art police but from lesbian-feminists and others who felt that the show concentrated too heavily on the issue of abortion and on male oppression to the exclusion of positive images of women. Turner countered that threats to the right to abortion represent a dangerous attack on women and that what's needed now is "to stand up for the ability to stay alive and intact, which is extremely threatened." The exhibit, she said, embodies "a love of women's rage, a love of women's intelligence," rather than a simple love of women.

Identifiable among those who were drawn to this opening were several strands of feminists, leftists and denizens of the art world. But what's perhaps most significant about SisterSerpents and the "Rattle Your Rage" exhibit—which will move on April 6 to the New York gallery ABC No Rio—is the fact that they don't spring from any of these established groupings and so may represent a fresh upwelling both politically and artistically. ■

John Stevenson is at work on a book titled *Ernie, Will and Frank: Imperialist Populism and the American Century*.

Boy's own glory: new film wears empire's old clothes

Mountains of the Moon
Directed by Bob Rafelson

By Pat Aufderheide

ONE OF THE MOST FASCINATING by-products of European imperialism was the lone male adventurer, an explorer and scientist on the hoof. The English turned this figure into a legend—the kind that's been reprocessed for us as Indiana Jones. But the original had more substance and, at the imperial center, an accompanying romantic glory.

Sometimes those adventurers were employees or veterans of the army or the civil service; sometimes they were younger sons of the landed gentry. They explored regions unfamiliar to the West (no matter how well known to the locals or to Arab and Asian traders). In this pre-specialization era, travelers' reports became the basis of modern anthropology and fueled the study of biology and geography as well as feeding the voracious maw of politicians eager for new worlds to conquer.

The European romance with the adventurer was a snapshot of the self-image of empire and its relationship to the Other. These men were emblems of the aspirations of their civilization. They found glory in lone triumph over what they conceived of as "nature." They presumed to invade in the name of curiosity and

often saw themselves as deeply sympathetic to and fascinated by the strange customs they encountered (no matter how blithely ignored by administrators rushing in after them). And their central passions occurred within a male universe that abolished domesticity and other "feminine" values.

High adventure: One of the last great heroes of the English empire was Sir Richard Francis Burton, a

FILM

19th-century self-taught scholar and adventurer. His translation of the unexpurgated *The Arabian Nights* may be his best-known work today. He translated the *Kama Sutra* and the writings of Luis de Camoes, the Portuguese Shakespeare, as well as dozens of other works. He also wrote 43 volumes on his own travels.

Burton journeyed through Africa and went to Mecca—then off-limits to non-Moslems—and other Moslem sites. He traveled to Salt Lake City (where he wrote a brilliant work on the Mormons) and to the Brazilian highlands. His tempestuous career—plagued by personal and professional crises—remains clouded by the rumors of the day because his wife (fearing scandal) destroyed his journals upon his death.

One of Burton's most celebrated adventures, the search for the Nile's origins, is now a movie, *Mountains of the Moon*. The film was directed

by another quixotic adventurer, Bob Rafelson. Rafelson, who has made only six movies in 20 years, including *Five Easy Pieces*, *Stay Hungry* and *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, has had a lifelong obsession with Burton, and it's easy to see why. Rafelson himself is something of a wanderer, having spent much of his life in treks to strange cultures that nostalgically invoke that former era. He's a thoughtful and emphatic character—too thoughtful for the culture of Hollywood, which has never embraced this respected but forbidding man. He has a certain impatience with the commercial pop culture of his own time and place. The virile romantic character of the not-so-distant past echoes for him with his own passions. Yet he's too smart to sink into a romance with romance; he can also see the ironies in the story.

Mountains of the Moon does battle, within its own story, between romance and irony, and if it finally loses, it also intrigues. It's plagued with visual pomposity and the weight of Rafelson's admiration for Burton. In a way, it is yet another lushly exotic epic in which the white heroes never relinquish center stage and the Africans are canny servants, hapless bearers or ferocious enemies. The costumes have an authentic lived-in look, but the picture still has a high-romantic gloss, seen through plenty of yellow filters. There's even a good lion scene. Na-

ture with a capital "N" is the challenge, with people with a small "p" a subset of the exotic wildness. Yet *Mountains of the Moon* offers a glimpse of the fascination that Africa held for wandering Englishmen, and it occasionally raises its eyebrows at their assumptions about the world.

Hero and sidekick: The center-stage heroes are also the site of a battle between two styles of empire: one scientific and the other military. The coolly savvy Burton (Patrick Bergin) and John Hanning Speke (Iain Glen)—an army officer and younger son of a landed family—begin as hero and sidekick on the first Nile expedition, which is sabotaged by tribal attack. Speke is a trigger-happy insecure kid with a passion for firearms. He blunders and antagonizes where Burton stops to explore the cultures of the country, but he also saves Burton's life when push comes to shove.

They become fast friends on the

These adventurers were emblems of the imperial aspirations of their civilization.

second trip; whether they ever become lovers is irrelevant, though their love for each other is patent and important to the plot. But they end up enemies when the untalented Speke returns to England before Burton and steals the limelight by claiming the discovery of Lake Victoria as the fount of the Nile (a claim that it turns out was true, although he

made it without proof and Burton doubted it). Speke gets the Royal Geographic Society's money to return to Africa, while Burton is neglected until a fateful debate that ends in tragedy.

Rafelson has stretched the truth here to make Speke into a suitable villain and to showcase Burton's virility. Not only does he give Burton a far more adventurous wife (Fiona Shaw) than in reality but he also gives Speke a sycophantic homosexual suitor who connives to turn him against his former mentor. With these choices Rafelson only reinforces the worst clichés of heroic imperial masculinity.

But he is not totally blind to the pretensions and even the comic aspects of all this. In one superb scene Burton meets privately with the missionary David Livingstone, who also had an impressive career battling "nature" in Africa. They immediately start showing each other their scars, eagerly stripping down to pre-pubescent "I'll show you mine" behavior. Then Livingstone says, "Do you miss Africa?" In a capper to the comic moment, they both agree they do.

Nature and natives: The film is also replete with scenes that play English overseas adventure straight, even though they provide a corrective to the plantation luxury of *Out of Africa*. There are dusty scenes of Arab towns and terrifying desert battles. Bearers steal and flee without a word from them about why.

The major speaking role for a black, Sidi Bombay (Paul Onsongo), is one of a wily conniver. The other major black role is Mabruki (Delroy Lindo), a runaway slave Burton rescues and then inadvertently returns to his captors. Since Mabruki remains a virtually inarticulate servant to Burton after his first rescue, their relationship seems less friendship than patronage with a gracious demeanor.

The only extended episode in which the Englishmen experience another culture finds the expedition captured by a malevolent African tribal king whose counselor fosters cruel practices both on his own population and on the prisoners. (Mabruki is a fabricated character, and the cruel kingdom is transposed from another time and place.)

So it's hard to understand how Rafelson thinks he executed what he told the *Los Angeles Times* was the "real challenge," "to show how the native culture experiences the white man." The central drama remains the struggle of the white men to survive the primal violence of untamed man and nature and the all-too-sophisticated violence of their own culture.

Mountains of the Moon is an epic with production values to match. Maybe that's why it's so hard for Rafelson to balance his fascination with the grandeur of the tale—as seen by the adventurers themselves—and his evident but only occasionally expressed awareness of its imperial implications. ■

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John Hanning Speke (Iain Glen) and Richard Burton (Patrick Bergin) find themselves surrounded by hostile warriors in Bob Rafelson's *Mountains of the Moon*.



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CHICAGO

May 4

32nd Annual Debs-Thomas-Harrington Dinner—honoring Arthur Loewy, secretary treasurer, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union. Featured speaker, Cecil Roberts, vice president, United Mine Workers of America, AFL-CIO: "Victory over Pittston—Lessons for the Progressive and Labor Movements." At the Midland Hotel, 172 W. Adams, 6 p.m. Tickets \$35, \$60 with message in program book. Contact Chicago DSA, 1608 N. Milwaukee, Chicago, IL 60647, (312) 384-0327.

May 5

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July 13-14

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NEW YORK

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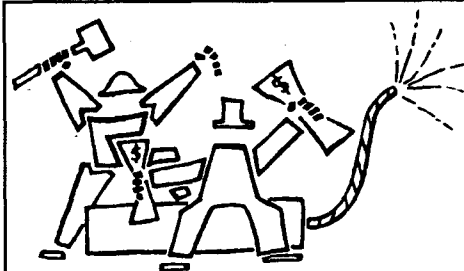
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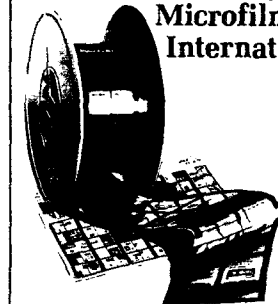
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Music is under attack again. Five years after popular music withstood the scrutiny of a Senate hearing instigated by Tipper Gore and her Parents Music Resource Center, a new series of initiatives is threatening to impose government controls on the sale of recorded music.

Legislation has been introduced in 12 states—and may be introduced in up to a dozen more—that would prohibit the sale of certain recordings unless they contain warning labels about their lyrics. Bills have already passed Pennsylvania's House of Representatives and Arizona's Senate Judiciary Committee. Because these bills could affect every type of recording sold in the U.S., they could have far-reaching consequences for First Amendment rights in America.

This time Gore is on the sidelines, replaced by extremist forces from the religious right. Led by Missouri state Rep. Jean Dixon, who believes rock music contains low-frequency sounds that "open up the subconscious mind to being brainwashed," today's censors include organizations allied with Phyllis Schlafly, Paul Weyrich, Rev. Donald Wildmon (known for boycotting TV sponsors and *The Last Temptation of Christ*) and Rev. James Dobson (Ted Bundy's pornography confessor). Dixon sent her bill to conservative lawmakers in 35 states, resulting in the current bevy of legislation.

These music censors stand a fair chance of succeeding in some states because they have portrayed their bills as referenda on rap and heavy metal, both unpopular with mainstream America. Indeed, a small number of groups sing vulgar, hateful or sexually explicit lyrics and parents have a right to be concerned.

But what makes these bills worrisome—and different from previous attacks on popular music—is the religious right's attempt to use the government to block the sale, distribution and availability of recordings.

When Cole Porter, Chuck Berry, the Rolling Stones and many others shocked the sensibilities of their times, their songs were kept off radio airwaves, but sale of the recordings was not subject to government control. When Gore led her crusade against heavy metal in 1985, she worked out a voluntary labeling agreement with the recording industry that remains in effect today (labels, on approximately 50 albums, say "Explicit Lyrics—Parental Advisory"). Today's bills, however, would inject government into a process that could chill the free expression of recording artists and the public's access to controversial music. Even Gore's group is against them.

While details vary from state to state, the bills would prohibit the sale of certain recordings unless they are labeled with a fluorescent yellow warning sticker under the plastic shrink-wrap. The Florida version would prohibit sale of these records altogether to persons under 18. In large black type, a typical label would read:

WARNING: May contain explicit lyrics descriptive of or advocating one or more of the following: nudity, satanism, suicide, sodomy, incest, bestiality, sadomasochism, adultery, murder, morbid violence, deviate sexual conduct in a violent context, or the use of illegal drugs or alcohol. **PARENTAL ADVISORY.**

Responsibility for labeling records would fall to record-store owners, who could be arrested, fined and imprisoned if they sold an unlabeled album that was judged offensive. Authors of the legislation claim that it is

aimed at heavy-metal and rap music. Pennsylvania state Rep. Ron Gamble has even offered to provide a list of offending records if his bill passes. But deciding which records will receive labels under these categories will not be so easy. Certain classical operas featuring violent death and seduction could be targeted, as could country and folk songs that describe alcohol use and adultery.

The list of eligible songs would probably run into the thousands and could include such familiar tunes as the traditional folk ballad "Tom Dooley" (murder), Simon and Garfunkel's "Richard Cory" (suicide), Elvis Presley's "Kissin' Cousins" (incest), such classics as "Little Brown Jug" and "Beer Barrel Polka" (alcohol use), and even the M*A*S*H theme song familiar to millions of Americans ("Suicide is Painless").

Moreover, with books and plays now on tape, labels could be placed on anything from Tom Wolfe to Shakespeare. Because allusions and images lead to subjective interpretations, any recording could be fair game. Missouri's Dixon has said that "Beatles songs contain very satanic messages," so her community could require labels on certain Beatles songs. Even lyrics that oppose drug use or violence could be fingered because they are "descriptive of" the problem.

Retailers faced with possible criminal penalties might avoid the costly burden of determining which among thousands of records to unwrap, label and rewrap by choosing not to stock certain albums, artists or types of music altogether. Already retailers are responding to possible legislative action by restricting sales of certain albums. Ultimately, record companies might pressure musicians to alter their work or might sign only non-controversial artists. Rock, rap, country and heavy-metal artists would likely suffer.

Proponents of these bills deny charges of censorship and say they have merely proposed labeling legislation designed to inform consumers and protect young people. But the same people who deny censorship also admit they would be pleased if certain records were pulled from the racks. According to Pennsylvania's Gamble, "The intent is not so much the warning labels but to make sure the records are not sold."

Constitutional experts call this "informal censorship" because it would stigmatize artists and criminalize the sale of music. They argue that these bills are not like consumer labeling laws because lyrics, unlike cigarettes and alcohol, have First Amendment protection. They add that if state legislatures proposed mandatory labels for books, there would be cries of censorship and impassioned pleas for the First Amendment.

First Amendment arguments seem not to bother today's music censors. For the right wing, music is one more front in what they view as a "cultural civil war," which already includes efforts to censor library books, school textbooks, television shows and federally funded art. For legislators inclined to vote for the bill, their worry is less about the 200-year-old Bill of Rights than the 30-second campaign spot that could label them pro-pornography or anti-children.

Certain rap and heavy-metal songs may indeed be symptoms of serious problems in America, particularly anger and alienation among youth and minorities. What legislators must ask is if the best way to deal with this anomie is to censor its expression. ■

Leonard Steinhorn is research director of People for the American Way.

By Leonard Steinhorn